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THE BRANDONS:

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OF

IRISH LIFE IN ENGLAND,

BY

JOHN DENVIR.



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PROLOGUE.



PREVIOUS to the war of 1859 between France and Austria the Papal States were occupied by the troops of these nations—the former having garrisons at Rome and Civita Vecchia, the latter in the Legations. After the disastrous defeat of the Austrians at Magenta they withdrew from the Pope's dominions, and, before they could be replaced by the Papal troops, the Revolutionary societies seized upon several towns, while the party of action demanded that war should at once be declared against Austria.

At Perugia, however, they met with a severe check, where they had anticipated taking possession of the place without difficulty. This incensed the Revolutionary Propaganda, some of whom declared the repulse to be due to the treachery of one of their own body, and more than hinted that so long as they had within their ranks men belonging to the old Roman nobility, so long might the genuine Republicans expect to be betrayed at every point.

It is a fact that there were men of high family throughout Italy who longed for the expulsion of the Austrians from their classic land, and to effect this some of the bolder spirits had even joined the Carbonari, by which name the members of the Italian secret societies were sometimes known. Indeed Pope Pius IX. himself, on coming to the throne, with all the ardent patriotism of an Italian, set about introducing reforms into his dominions, and none more than he desired to see the end of Austrian rule in Italy.

The good Pio Nono hoped by these measures to fertilise the soil of Italy with freedom, but soon he discovered he had opened a flood-gate he could not control. He shrank back alarmed to find he had not sufficiently calculated the volcanic Italian nature and that, instead of the fructifying stream he intended, he had let loose a torrent of fiery lava, which burnt up and destroyed many of the best lovers of Italy, and ultimately caused the downfall of his own temporal power.

Among those who hailed with enthusiasm these first public acts of the Pontiff was the Prince Gonzalvi. He, too, felt the same patriotic fervour, and besides, though by birth a member of one of the oldest Roman families, was in principle a Republican ; indeed he had actually gone the length of being initiated into the secret Revolutionary society. When the excesses of this party forced many to abandon their cause, he still clung to it. While not thoroughly in the confidence of the Revolutionists because of his supposed sympathy, as a noble, with those they looked upon as their oppressors, he was ostracised by the bulk of the Roman nobility, on account of his well-known opinions, as a disgrace to their order, even though they had no actual knowledge of his connection with the Carbonari, which was, of course, only known to the initiated.

Some few years previous to the time when the French and Austrians were making Italy their battle-field the domestic life of Prince Gonzalvi had been clouded by the death of his wife. His only daughter, Bianca, had been sought in marriage by a wealthy Venetian, Aurelio Mamiani, also a member of the Carbonari, like the Prince himself, although, unlike him, he was known to frequent what was considered the best Roman society. Being comparatively a stranger in the city of the Cæsars, it was surprising how he seemed to possess the *entree* into every sphere of its daily life. His suit with Bianca had not been successful, for she loved a noble Roman youth, Count Guiseppe Carafa, a patriotic Italian, like her father, and, prompted no doubt by the example of the Prince, he too belonged to the Revolutionary party. Ultimately, with the approbation of the Prince, they were married, and the few months that had now elapsed had been for them most happy.

In the early morning of an Italian summer's day the Prince Gonzalvi looked from the window of his palace, which overlooked the historic Tiber. This was the hour, when the morning air was pure and buoyant, generally chosen by him for his recreations, which were ever of an intellectual character. He was a well-formed man of moderate stature. His complexion was olive, and his short jetty hair clustered round a lofty forehead. His dark and eloquent eyes were the chief features in a countenance which, though pleasing, was not otherwise remarkable.

The Prince turned from the window, and looking towards the door of the apartment was much surprised, at such an unusual hour, to see his daughter Bianca hurriedly entering the apartment, evidently much agitated. Before he could utter a word of surprise she exclaimed—

"Oh, my father, I fear you must fly from Rome, even this moment."

He was commencing to speak, when she motioned him to be silent, as she vehemently continued—

"You have been denounced before the Secret Tribunal as the traitor who caused the repulse at Perugia!"

"What folly is this, Bianca? Who dares accuse me of this?"

"Mamiani!"

"Impossible, my child! This is some wild dream. Mamiani has ever been my most trusted friend."

"You are too good for such companionship. Your noble, simple nature cannot fathom the wiles of men like this."

"But why should he do this? I never injured him."

"Do you forget that he sought and was refused my hand?"

"But did he not bear the refusal nobly? Why he smilingly declared to me that Carafa was more worthy of you, and wished your wedded life might still be happy."

"Did I not tell you that my woman's tact could pierce deeper into such a nature than all your learned lore? I could see his falseness, even through the smiling face, and felt that his smooth tongue might one day be sharper to kill than the keen poignard."

"His being refused your hand does, I confess, give some motive. But stay! How could you know of this?"

"From Guiseppe, my husband. You were denounced by Mamiani to the Secret Tribunal, who, convinced of the truth of the accusation, condemned you to die. When they sought for one to carry out their decree, Mamiani, with diabolical ingenuity, proposed

that Guiseppe, being your son-in-law, and moreover a noble, and therefore an object of suspicion, should, to prove his fidelity to his oath, be ordered to execute their dreadful sentence."

"Oh, fiend! But no! There must be some fever in your blood. How could Guiseppe have told you this? To reveal the mysteries of our body the penalty is death."

"Too well I know it. Guiseppe revealed the secret in his troubled slumber. His moans and mutterings, full of anguish, startled me from my sleep, and from these I gathered something of the fearful task that had been imposed upon him. To put an end to the horror of his frightful dreams I roused him, telling him what I had heard. He then, in disjointed sentences, revealed all to me. As the cold sweat streamed from his face he every moment looked fearfully around, as if expecting to see some shadowy form about to plunge a dagger into him. He, too, must fly. I urged him to make instant preparation, while I hurried here to warn you."

Prince Gonzalvi could now no longer doubt the truth of Bianca's dreadful narrative. Preparations for flight must at once, he could see, be made. Retiring to a private apartment he chose hastily some necessary articles of clothing, and after taking a sorrowful farewell of his daughter, made his way to the residence of a friend, where he knew he would be safe from suspicion until a fitting opportunity to escape from Rome should offer.

Meanwhile, the unhappy Count Carafa was filled with remorse at his own weakness in consenting, or appearing to consent, to carry out the horrible task imposed upon him, and overpowered with dread at his impending doom when the Carbonari became aware of the flight of Prince Gonzalvi. So fearfully had he been affected that his reason, for the time, completely lost

its balance, and scarcely had Bianca left him when he rushed forth distracted from the house; but it being early morning there were few, if any, to observe him. In this pitiable condition he knew not whither he went, wandering to and fro about the city.

As the morning advanced there were gradually more people stirring, so that his wild and disordered aspect began to excite attention. At length later still he found himself amidst a crowd in the great hall leading to the Pauline Chapel, in the Pope's Palace of the Quirinal.

Soon a pair of folding doors were thrown open, and, amidst the throng, he was borne into the chapel.

None of the congregation, who were engrossed in the solemn service which soon commenced, took notice of the fearful condition of the wretched Carafa, who flung himself upon his knees, praying to Heaven for mercy and pity.

He was aware, in a dreamy kind of way, of all that was going forward, but a wild thought held possession of his brain, that the numerous cowed figures he saw were chaunting his own Requiem, and that the vast congregation had come to assist at his obsequies.

The clammy drops of agony stood upon his face, and every muscle of his frame quivered and thrilled as he listened.

Looking up towards the altar, and lifting his eyes to Heaven, he imagined he saw blazing afar overhead in letters of fire the dreadful sentence of the Carbonari, which applied with such terrible force to himself.

"The associate who shall refuse to execute the sentence shall be perjured, and, as such, shall be put to death upon the spot."

A movement amongst the cowed forms near him caused him to withdraw his eyes for a moment from the withering sight, only as he thought, to meet the

terrible gaze of an executioner. Again Carafa looked towards Heaven for mercy, but to his agonised soul it seemed that not even was there left the mercy of Heaven for him—the man who had sworn to slay his more than father. No mercy was there, but, instead, the dreadful words of doom, blazing aloft and blasting his sight. Again he read words which were only too familiar to him—

"If the victim succeed in escaping he shall be pursued incessantly in every place; and the guilty shall be struck by an invisible hand, were he sheltered on the bosom of his mother, or even in the tabernacle."

Just then the solemn service ceased, and, for the first time since he had received the terrible commission of the Carbonari, his mind began to regain its ordinary action. On the instant his determination was made up—he would fly!

* * * * *

Through the ever watchful eyes of the creatures in his employ, Aurelio Mamiani was made aware of the almost simultaneous flight of Gonzalvi and Carafa. Of Prince Gonzalvi they had lost the clue, but his son-in-law had been seen to enter the Quirinal in a distracted manner.

Mamiani hurried at once to the Trastevere quarter, and entered a wine shop in the Lungara.

He there found one he was in search of—one apparently little more than a youth, tall and thin, and lithe and serpent-like in his motions. His keen eyes were closely set together. His nose was slightly hooked like the beak of an eagle, and indeed he was as like a bird of prey as could well be imagined.

This youth, Griffo by name, one of Mamiani's trustiest instruments, was a very nursling of the Revolution; born and brought up in the Lungara. Almost a child, as he must have been at the time, he

had taken part in the defence of Rome in 1849, when Garibaldi, with Armellini, Saffi, and Mazzini, the Triumvirs of the short-lived Roman Republic, held the Eternal City against the French, under Oudinot.

Griffo, whose attire was quite in keeping with his personal appearance, was in every way a striking contrast to his employer. It would be difficult to conceive how these two could have one object in common. Mamiani, with his stately, well-set soldier-like form, frank-looking fair face, light brown hair and tasteful dress, was a perfect contrast as regards outward appearance to the young Italian. There was a short greeting between the two, a few whispered words, and they hurriedly left the place, taking the direction of the Quirinal

They entered the Pauline Chapel as their victim (for there could be no doubt of their fearful errand) had done. They soon discovered him, but, owing to the crowd, they could not at first approach him. As the people rose to leave, on the conclusion of the service, Mamiani whispered to his companion—

“Now, Griffo, now is your time. He must not see me or he will be prepared. Remember your oath, you could not kill him in a fitter place.”

Mamiani disappeared and Griffo smiled grimly and grasped the concealed poignard more firmly.

The person of Griffo was unknown to the doomed man, so that he approached his executioner without the slightest chance of defending himself. In a moment the poignard was buried in his throat.

There was a cry of alarm and dread from those who saw Carafa's blood spouting out on the pavement of the sacred building. He was dead before a hand could be raised to avenge him.

So great, however, was the dread of the Secret Tribunal and of its instruments, that no one dared to

molest Griffo, who glanced around with a defiant smile and walked leisurely out of the Pauline Chapel, unabashed and audacious.

He must have left Rome almost immediately, for he was no longer to be found in his usual haunt in the Lungara.

Heartrending as was now the pitiable condition of the widowed Bianca, it did not save her from the persecution of Mamiani. He, guessing that Carafa must have given her the information which had enabled her to warn her father to fly, now resolved, for his own safety as well as to be revenged upon her, to compass her death also, as he had done her husband's.

She, however, with the keen instinct that had long ago divined the man's character, kept so closely secluded that for a short time she baffled his attempts at vengeance. Within a week it became evident that every precaution she could take would be in vain. She discovered that her enemy had actually gained a footing in her very household. Her knowledge of medicine, obtained through assisting so frequently, when a girl, in her father's scientific experiments, enabled her to detect poison in a meal prepared for her by a domestic in whom she had, hitherto, the greatest confidence.

At once she fled, seeing that there was no safety for her in Rome, as, though Pope Pius IX. was nominally its ruler, the real Sovereigns of the Eternal City were the Carbonari.

On the evening of the day of the Countess Bianca's flight there was a ball given by the Marquis Rimboli. The best society of Rome was there, and the fearful fate of Count Guiseppe Carafa, together with the mysterious flight of his wife and father-in-law, were the chief topics of conversation. The greatest commiseration was felt for them, none being more vehement in expressions of sympathy than Aurelio Mamiani.

CHAPTER I.—BOHEMIA.

LIVERPOOL has a larger floating population than most great cities. This, it might be thought, would, in process of time, introduce a considerable foreign element among the settled inhabitants. There are, however, many places—London for instance—more cosmopolitan than Liverpool. Nevertheless, there are a few districts in Liverpool, and one in particular, where the people and their surroundings are counterpart of what may be found in certain localities in the metropolis. It is in one of these neighbourhoods that the first scene (to use the dramatic form) of this narrative opens.

The name of Homer's Garden is not to be found in the map of Liverpool, but the place does exist withal. It is not far from one of the great thoroughfares leading to the "North-end," and also adjoins a street which, like the "Garden," itself, has seen better days, and is chiefly noted as containing the once fashionable Royal Olympic Theatre.

The "Lympic," as its patrons fondly and familiarly designate it, has fallen upon very evil days indeed. Formerly it was frequented by well-to-do audiences, and its boards graced by actors of some standing. Now it is little more than a "gaff," with its two houses nightly, from which troop forth droves of rough lads and bare-headed girls, who represent the patrons of the legitimate drama, and who can indulge their taste at the exceedingly economical charge of twopence, while for sixpence can be enjoyed the aristocratic luxury of admission to the boxes.

In the downward scale the theatre has somewhat distanced the "Garden," for it is scarcely possible to

imagine that the drama could fall to a lower ebb than at the Olympic.

The decline was gradual—extending in fact over many years. “Hamlet” or “Macbeth” made way for such Saturday night melodramas as “The Bleeding Nun of Lindeneburgh,” varied by occasional “dog pieces,” with the inevitable “terrific combats,” carefully timed to dramatic music, in which the proprietors of the dogs (they always go in pairs) make up in their bulldog-like mouthings for the want of ferocity on the part of the animals, whose performances, poor things, were often ludicrously tame, particularly when they would not seize the villain of the piece at the right moment,—as frequently happened. Then for a long time the theatre subsisted the whole year round on its Christmas Pantomimes, which, to do them justice, were always full of rollicking fun, and allusions, more broad than pointed, perhaps, to passing events. In these spectacles the Fairly Queen, wisely keeping clear of home politics, always enabled the British Lion to triumph over every foreign foe.

While the pantomime ran was, therefore, the harvest time of the year for the Olympic, the treasury being then in a healthy condition. “The ghost walked” regularly every Saturday to the great comfort of the players—good, light-hearted souls as they generally were, who could even take bad business cheerfully. Stubbs, who kept the “Garrick Arms” close to, at these times looked brisk and cheery, and Homer’s Garden and the neighbourhood seemed always to brighten up at the approach of each brief season of prosperity. Then the young ladies who figured in the ballet as the attendants of the “Fairy Queen of the Realms of Light,” furbished up the portions of their wardrobe which they had to find for themselves, and anxious mothers crowded round the stage-door with their

children—some of them tiny little creatures who could scarcely toddle—that they might get an engagement for them at the “Lympic,” to form, maybe, part of the Lilliputian Army in the Grand and Gorgeous Pantomime of “Harlequin Gulliver,” or to sing with all the strength of their infant lungs “This is the ’ouse that Jack built.” Even in the summer time, in those days, a sort of aroma of the Olympic seemed to pervade the neighbourhood, for often you might see hung up in the window of “my uncle,” among other portions of theatrical costume, the spangled skirt, now looking tawdry enough in the glare of day, which under the lime-light had appeared so bright and ethereal, floating so gracefully around the shapely form of the queen of the fairy throng.

But as time went on you even missed these from the windows of the pawnshops, where they had so often excited the admiration of stage-struck amateurs; and when, at last, one year of bad business came and no pantomime at the “Lympic,” its staunchest supporters shook their heads in dismay, and confessed that now indeed the downfall of the drama had come. And so the Royal Olympic Theatre gradually became what it is.

Homer’s Garden itself had, on the whole, so to speak, put on a better face in fighting against adversity. It might in reality be as poor as most places to be found in Liverpool, but there remained, at least in some parts of it, an appearance of shabby-gentility—an attempt to keep up the dignity of a place which had formerly been the abode of people of comparative wealth and position. The houses, now so tumble-down and seedy looking, have originally been well built; but quickly-fleeting fashion has long since bidden farewell to the Garden, and flown to more favoured localities. Mingled with what might be termed the

aboriginal Saxon element, there is a strong infusion of other nationalities, principally Irish and Italian. As a little Irish blood, with its electric vitality, goes a great way in leavening the mass of other races, and is often apparent, even after many generations ; so though the Saxon or the Latin element may sometimes most meet the eye, there are times when the more demonstrative and exuberant Celt appears to rule the roast in the cosmopolitan community of Homer's Garden. The houses, being large, are mostly let off in separate tenements, as you find in the Dublin Liberties. The cellars are invariably tenanted apart from the houses overhead, each being in itself a miniature manufactory of the varied productions for which the locality is famous. Indeed, from cellar to attic, there is always work going on ; for Homer's Garden, though Bohemian in its general aspect, is industrious also, and, if poor, tries with all its might to be light-hearted and respectable. Here you will find in course of completion chairs, tables, chests of drawers, and other cabinet-work, which on Saturdays used to be rushed off for sale to the "Arcade," before the Midland Railway swept away the greater portion of that well-known *depot* for slop furniture. Sometimes one portion of a family is engaged making articles, while another portion is out selling what has been already completed ; and from these travelling merchants you can buy step-ladders, meat-safes, tin cans, plaster images, ice-creams, stove-ornaments, and many other things—all of genuine home manufacture. This is, however, only the industrial and mechanical aspect of the Garden. It has also a strong artistic and, so to speak, professional side. It is true, the palmy days of the Olympic being gone, that the higher walks of the drama are closed in this locality, but there are still numbers of itinerant performers—

Punch and-Judy men, acrobats, organ-grinders, and musicians of various kinds. All these dwell together—generally in good-fellowship. They do “break out” occasionally, but, after all, seldom figure in the police court, as the good offices of “Number 9,” the name by which the policeman on the beat is known, are generally sufficient to restore peace and quietness. Few people have any idea of the semi-magisterial functions Mr. “Officer has often to perform, and how much the well-being of the community depends upon his tact and judgement.

One of the oldest of the “Gardeners” was Mr. Michael (or as he was more generally termed, Mick) Muldowney. In London Mick would be termed a costermonger. Through the aid of his thrifty wife, Kitty, he rented and managed the whole of a large house, which was let off, according to the prevailing custom, to a number of lodgers, who might be taken as a fair sample of the neighbourhood generally.

It was a summer morning, and Mick’s seasonable stock-in-trade (consisting of oranges and other fruit) was artistically displayed on his gaily-painted barrow, in which a donkey was harnessed ready for the day’s work. In fact, it was quite a handsome turn-out that stood facing Muldowney’s door. Mick himself and Mrs. Muldowney, and young Mick a sharp lad of eight or ten years, were at breakfast. The room in which they sat was the front parlour, the door of which, as well as the street door, being left open (such being the primitive custom of the place). Mick, while he enjoyed his rasher and conversed with Kitty, all the while kept an eye on his perambulating emporium outside. The tidily-kept room spoke well for Mrs. Muldowney’s qualities as a housewife, but her chief delight was in keeping polished to the utmost degree of brightness the various metal articles sym-

metrically arranged over the fire-place. Of these she was as proud as if they were a service of plate. Mick's taste for the fine arts was shown in the gorgeously-coloured prints of saints and patriots which graced the walls. Kitty was, according to custom, recounting to Mick the various domestic events of the previous day—what lodgers had paid and who were defaulters, and comparing notes with her spouse generally. Altogether they looked as comfortable a family group as you might wish to see in their station of life. Mick was short and stout-built, with a certain sheepish kind of look that gave him an air of the greatest simplicity. But Mick "was all there," as the saying is. Let any one, presuming on his supposed "greenness," think he might easily be taken in, and he would find himself reckoned up to a nicety by this "innocent" Hibernian. Indeed, a closer observer would see by the shrewd and knowing-looking twinkle of his eye, just barely discernible through the sheepish look, that Mr. Muldowney's head was screwed on right after all. The *vanithee*, Mrs. Muldowney, was a good, homely specimen of an Irishwoman, from whose cheeks twenty year's of life in Homer's Garden had not banished the bloom acquired on the Kerry hills, and whose chief delight it was to keep old Mick and young Mick "clane and dacent."

"And so Jackymo brought him here," said Mick, "Well, Jackymo is a goodhearted sowl, but I'm afeard the poor ould craythur will do little good with the images."

"He does seem a poor helpless bein', Heaven look to him," replied Kitty. "His hands is as soft and white as a lady's. 'Tis little hard work he ever done, I'm thinkin'."

"Any way," said Mick, "it was kindly of Jackymo to get Mr. Beronti to give him the images on thrust,

to thry if he could sell them for a livin'. Where did Jackymo pick him up?"

"He was turnin' his organ in London-road, and makin' the monkey go through his tricks, while Catterina was singin' one of thim Italian songs, when they noticed Antonio, as they call the ould man, listenin' to them, all as one as if he was thinkin' where he had heard the tune before, and just like—like—"

"As I might be listenin' in some of these foreign parts to some fiddler or piper playin' "Nell Flaherty's Drake," said Mick, supplying a comparison.

"Indeed, I suppose so," acquiesced Mrs. Muldowney. "Anyway, they could see the hunger fairly starin' out of his eyes."

"And so," summed up Mick, "they brought him on here, and you gev the poor ould man the bit and the sup, like the big-hearted Kitty ye always wor."

The object of their discourse, the old Italian, who had, on the previous night, been brought here in a destitute condition by his countryman Giacomo, now appeared in the doorway. His feeble looks and threadbare, ragged garments told of hardships; but on the whole he looked more cheerful than when on the night before he had sought the shelter of the Muldowney's roof.

In each hand leaning inward against the upper portion of his arm and breast, he carried a plaster image, which he was now going forth to try to sell.

Mick saluted him with the well-known hearty Milesian greeting, "The top o' the mornin' to you, Mr. Tonio!"

Old Antonio, with such earnestness, thanked them for their hospitality, and received in return their good wishes for his success, as he went forth to make his first essay as an imageman.

Having gazed on his neighbours going forth like himself to their varied pursuits, he found his way into the main artery leading to the centre of the town.

He was passing a large gin-palace at the corner of a side street, where some rough fellows of the species known as "corner men" were hanging about, looking out for the chance of finding some one who would "stand a pint," or indulging in horse-play at the expense of passers-by. They saw Antonio and his images: such an opportunity was not to be lost. One of the "roughs" gave another a shove against the old Italian, which sent him falling, with much force, into the street, at the same time breaking his images.

Before they had a moment to enjoy their victim's discomfiture, one rough received a blow on the side of the head which knocked him down, while a second was bowled over in the same scientific style on the top of his friend.

The assailant of the corner-man was an athletic young gentleman who had seen the occurrence. The others tried to close in upon him, thinking by their number to overwhelm him, but, with the dexterity of an athlete, he struck out from the shoulder, so that they were soon glad to give him a wide berth. Number 9, the policeman on the beat, who generally *was* about when wanted, now came up, and the roughs—who could—were glad to slink off discomfited and astonished at the young man's strength of muscle. His well-knit frame was as symmetrical as it was strong. His handsome face, now glowing with honest indignation, looked one that at another time could be bright and joyous. He had dark grey eyes which, now, lit by anger, looked darker still, and the short curly hair which clustered round his shapely head

was of a dark shade also, like his beard, which he wore long and flowing.

"Now then, you two beauties, come along with me," said Number 9, as he collared, one with each hand, two of the corner-men.

These looked stupified, and, if they had ever heard of such things, would no doubt wonder if there had been an earthquake or an avalanche.

One of them asked in reply to the policeman's invitation—"What for? Where to?"

"Oh, you know the way well enough. You've been in Cheapside before, Mr. Jim Brown."

"Oh, very well; I'll book this 'ere swell cove for muzzlin' me."

"So we will, Jim, s'help me!" said the other. "I gives him in charge, I does. Come along, Number 9."

"What, Joe Bradley? Never! Not another of the green linnets surely!" exclaimed Number 9, in affected surprise.

Meanwhile the young gentleman had tenderly raised Antonio from the ground.

"Are you much hurt?" he asked.

"I am a little shaken, but I will soon get over it. But oh! my images! How shall I now meet the good Mr. Beronti?"

"Oh, yes; I know him. Were they his?"

"Yes; he gave them to me to sell, that I might earn a trifle for food."

"You are not used to this way of life?"

The old man seemed at first a little disinclined to answer. At length he said—"Truly not."

"Let me see. They are not so badly broken after all. Let us gather the pieces up. This one, I think, is the Dying Gladiator, and the other is—"

"A copy of the Farnese Hercules."

"You know something about such a subject, I see."

The old man hesitated for a moment before answering. At length he said—"Mr. Beronti told me their names."

Together they picked up the broken fragments, and placed them in a handkerchief. At the request of Number 9 they then accompanied him to the bride-well to book the corner-men.

The booking of the two roughs did not take long. The young man asked to be allowed to take away the broken images.

"It is the rule for such like as these to be retained here until the case comes on."

"If you will allow me to take them, I will guarantee their production before the magistrate. Here is my card."

"Oh," said the booking clerk, glancing at the card. "'Mr. Hugh Brandon'. Of 'The Princess's' I think?" Brandon nodded.

"Oh, certainly, sir, you can take them."

Brandon then led the old man away, and observing his meagre and hungry appearance, placed his hand gently on his shoulder, and looked kindly into his face.

"Why, man," said he in hearty tones, "you look to have so little life in you, it is a wonder these fellows did not knock it out of you. You are hungry?"

"Indeed, no, sir—thanks to some poor country people of my own, and Mr. Muldowney, a good Englishman."

"A what?" exclaimed Brandon, laughing heartily.

"I think you must have been in Homer's Garden."

"Yes, I think that is the name of the place."

"I know honest Mick; but you amuse me, calling him an Englishman. Why, man, you could as easily make him an Italian—easier—indeed—Signor Michele Mildoni! That would pass even in Florence or Naples. But I am forgetting. You must have some refresh-

ment with me, and then we can see what can be done for Signor Beronti's castings."

In a few minutes more they were seated in a neighbouring restaurant, the young fellow not minding a bit the looks of surprise at his companionship with the ragged-looking old foreigner. Antonio protested he had already breakfasted with his countryman, Giacomo. Brandon would not listen to this, but ordered in more generous food and drink than the old man had probably for a long time enjoyed—himself, with delicate tact, joining in the repast to keep the old man in countenance.

CHAPTER II.—BEHIND THE SCENES.



UGH Brandon, accompanied by Antonio, the Italian image man, on leaving the restaurant and passing through some bustling streets, came to the Princess's Theatre, which, as every Liverpolitan knows—the palmy days of the "Royal" being a thing of the past—is now the most fashionable in the town.

As they passed in by the stage entrance an ugly-looking dog ran up to Brandon, and, standing up on its hind legs, lifted its paws upon his breast, and gave him a most demonstrative and affectionate greeting."

"Good dog—poor Nellie," said he, patting the animal encouragingly on its shaggy coat.

"All the unfortunates sticks to you, Mr. Brandon," said the door-keeper, a thorough old Cerberus, who was not to be taken in by the plausible stories of that numerous tribe whose curiosity prompts them to use

all manner of devices in order to get a glimpse "behind the scenes."

"Look at that there animal now," he continued. "Nobody would have her a gift. She used to get knocked about here and there by everybody, and no wonder. What's she good for, I should like to know?"

"Well, you know, Johnson, Nellie belonged to that unfortunate Dixon, and for the poor fellow's sake someone should look after her. Have you heard how he is this morning?"

"He'll never shift scenes again, Mr. Brandon, I'm afraid. He's another pensioner of yours."

"Now, Johnson, really——"

"Come now, sir. What's the use of your going for to deny it? You'll never make your fortune—you won't."

"Well, but how is poor Bill? I hadn't time to go to the hospital last night to see him."

"I hadn't time myself, but his matey, Tomkins, was there, and he says he'll never get over it. That was a desparate fall, sir, from the flies, right smack on his head."

"I'm sorry to hear that Bill is so bad. His poor wife—she must feel it sorely."

"Yes, with all them youngsters, too."

"If Bill does not get better, we must see what can be done for her."

"There you go again, sir. Why you'll want to set up an orphanage on your own account. Anyways Bill's mateys swear by you. Bill himself didn't like you at first. He said you seemed such a stuck-up cove, but after a bit the whole crowd of them, scene-shifters, supers and all, said as how you was a regular thoroughbred 'un, considering you was Irish."

"Doesn't the compliment strike you as being somewhat a doubtful one, Johnson?"

"How's that, sir? It was well meant, any how."

"It was, no doubt, as you say, well meant, but don't you see he must be a mean fellow that accepts a compliment to himself at the expense of his country. They did mean well, I believe you, Johnson—otherwise I should have taken it as an affront."

"Well, now, I never looked at it in that light before, but you Irish are so quick in taking people up and reading them."

"There's no offence, Johnson, after all, where none is meant. It's more amusing than anything else—that calm, stolid assumption of superiority by the most illiterate Briton over the rest of the world. However, this gossip won't get that scene for "Lucrezia Borgia" done. Come along, friend Antonio."

"New walking gentleman that, sir?" said Johnson, in an undertone, pointing to the Italian.

"Now don't, Johnson, or they'll say you're 'understudying' to take the 'First Comic's' place."

As the other two passed along, Johnson soliloquised—

"Well, he does pick up some queer coves, surely. Whatever does he want with that ragged old image-man? Another pensioner, I'll be bound."

Brandon, round whom the ugly dog frisked and frolicked in the highest glee, made his way, as if accustomed to the place, with ease, even in the semi-darkness, through what to Antonio seemed a perfect maze. Such appeared to him the intricacies of the flats, side-scenes, cords, pulleys, and windlasses that surrounded them as they passed on to the stage, which was honeycombed with traps, principally used at the pantomime season for the startling appearances and disappearances of demons, sprites, and other supernatural characters. The curtain being up, they could see the full extent of the auditorium, now,

of course, quite deserted, as were also the stage and orchestra, it being rather early for rehearsal time, so that the only people visible were a few of the stage carpenters. They crossed the stage and went up what seemed to the Italian almost endless flights of steps, until they arrived at what was evidently the scene-painting department. Here they found a man in a paint bespattered blouse laying on a scene with a broad flat brush what appeared to be whitewash, of which he had a big bucketful. Occasionally he went to the side and pulled a cord, which, passing through a pulley, lowered or raised the scene, through a slit in the floor, to whatever height he wished, and enabled him to get at any part of his work without the aid of a step-ladder.

"Good morning, Joe," said Brandon, looking at what the man was doing. "That is for the cottage interior, I suppose. When you have sized that bit just put it away until to-morrow, and let me have that scene for 'Lucrezia Borgia.' It will be wanted to-night, you know."

"All right, sir," and Joe hauled the scene he had been operating upon—as yet but a great white surface—further up, right away into the roof of the theatre, and replaced it by a partially painted landscape.

"Oh!" said Brandon to Antonio, "Just put your images down on that table while I go and get on my working dress, and Joe—"

"Yes, sir."

"Get me some plaster of Paris, please."

Joe went to a cupboard and brought out the required article, placing it, along with a can of water, on the table beside the broken images.

Presently Brandon returned, dressed in a blouse like his assistant, and wearing linen overalls to cover his trousers. He wore a comfortable-looking, easy-fitting cap, and smoked a short pipe—together looking as

free and easy as need be, and as unlike the well-dressed gentleman he was a moment ago as could be imagined—indeed, having more than anything else the appearance of a Parisian *ouvrier*, and that by no means of the dandy sort.

Giving directions to Joe now and then as to some minor details, he set to work on the scene, Antonio watching with considerable interest the progress of their work.

"What do you think of this sort of painting, Signor Antonio—different to the great masters, eh?"

"I have never been so close to a scene before. One can hardly make it out. It seems a maze of thick coarse lines, and heavy touches of different colours."

"You don't flatter, at any rate," said Brandon, smiling. "Just go back a few yards and look at it again."

"Yes, to be sure, it is painted to be viewed at a distance."

Stepping back some paces he again looked at the picture, and seemed lost in silent admiration. The thick, heavy strokes—some straight, some curved—now formed bold, striking, and symmetrical architectural outlines. The heavy masses of colour, which, close to, were mere daubs of paint, became deep rich shadows, causing the objects to stand out solidly from the canvas, or were transformed into floods of light, brightening up and giving life to the graceful capitals and the fluting of the pillars in the foreground, as well as to the many-tinted foliage and the hills melting into the clouds in the distance.

"'Tis lovely," Antonio murmured to himself, as if revelling in the scene. Suddenly he started and exclaimed. "Why, Signor Brandon, that is—"

"Do you recognise the subject?"

"No, no; I was mistaken," said the Italian quickly.

Brandon now stepped back to look at what he had been doing. He said—"Well now, do you know, it is like a little bit I recollect seeing before. My memory has been unconsciously guiding my imagination and my hand. It is, now I notice it, a striking scene that once caught my eye in your own country, in the neighbourhood of Civita Castellana."

"You were travelling, I suppose, in search of subjects for your pencil, as an artist?"

"Say rather in search of subjects for my sword, as a soldier. Yes, signor, It is now getting on for ten years since my brother Jack and I entered the Papal Zouaves. That scene brings back to my mind a stirring day. There were but two hundred of us, under Colonel de Charette, while the enemy were ten to one, and we had to fight every inch of our way back to Rome."

Brandon worked away rapidly at his painting, producing every few moments some new and picturesque effect by a succession of swift and masterly strokes. After some time he turned round to Antonio, saying—

"I am rather pressed for time with this flat, or I'd see what could be done with Mr. Beronti's images, What! you have repaired them yourself? Let me see. Why, this is excellent. You have filled in the piece missing from the arm capitally. Those muscles are so good you might have studied anatomy. Why, Antonio, you are quite an artist."

"Ah, sir, you jest with me; but I hope Signor Beronti will not be angry."

"Angry! Not he. You shape so well, I would not be surprised if he made a modeller of you."

By this time the rehearsal was going on down below on the stage. They could hear the violins and double-bass rasping away at bits of the opera; and snatches, now of a soprano solo, now of the bass part, and at

another time of the full band and chorus, floated upwards to them.

Presently, as if gradually coming nearer and nearer to them, a magnificent voice was heard, singing a few bars of some melody.

"That's Signor Roni, the new Italian basso," said Joe, the assistant scene-painter, to Brandon.

"I did hear you helped to bring him out, Mr. Brandon. How they all do take to you, them foreign artists and singers and players and musicians! Signor Roni is a regular Italian, and no mistake. You could tell him anywhere."

"Do you think so, Joe?"

"Of course. Just listen to him now. There's a voice for you. That's splendid music, isn't it, sir? None of ours can touch it. Then what a pure Italian accent. Talk about Mario—bah! Hush! Listen! Isn't it beautiful?"

It was a plaintive air, sung by a rich, deep, mellow voice. These were the words:—

Shule, shule, shule aroon
Shule go succir, agus shule go cuin,
Shule go den durrus agus eligh glum
Is go de tu mo murnin slan.

"Isn't that fine?" said Joe, in admiration. "You're an Italian, now. Isn't that a pure accent?"

"I don't know the words," said Antonio, "and, do you know, I don't think it is Italian at all," he continued, his native politeness apparently preventing him from contradicting the scene-painter more positively.

"Not Italian!" exclaimed Joe, astonished. He then went quietly over to Brandon, and said in a low tone—"Mr. Brandon, this fellow here you've picked up is an impostor. I'd swear I don't think *he's* an Italian."

Presently Signor Roni himself appeared—a foreign-looking gentleman, sure enough, but with a rollicking,

roguish look in his eye that spoke more of Tipperary than of Florence.

"Ha, Brandon, *ma bouchal*, how's every inch of you," he heartily exclaimed as they both shook hands.

Joe looked somewhat astonished at the greeting, and said—

"You can come the Irish above a bit, Signor Roni, I must say, and English too—just like a native. That was a lovely air you sang just now. Are there any English words to it?"

"Oh yes, a countryman of Brandon and mine, Gerald Griffin, wrote some charming English words to it. This is a bit of it—"

And then Roni sang to the same air as before—

But soon my love will be my bride,
And, happy by our own fireside,
My veins shall feel the rosy tide
That lingering hope denied.

"But look here, Signor Roni, you don't mean to say you're an Irishman?"

"Divil a haporth else."

"Well, you do surprise me. You sing them Italian pieces beautifully. Wherever did you pick up such a lovely Italian accent?"

"In Tipperary, Joe."

"Never! You don't mean for to say they speak Italian there?"

"They speak that sort of Italian anyway."

"You're chaffing now, signor. That solo was never in Irish."

"What else? Sure I'm Irish."

"Then you changed your name when you went on the stage?"

"Divil a taste! Some people call the name Rooney—that's all."

While they spoke, several of the company strolled in, rehearsal being over, to have a look at the new

like you newspaper people."

After a little more friendly banter of this kind, Jack Brandon and Signor Roni were introduced to each other, and with quick professional instinct they became as old friends in a few moments.

"How did you know where to find me, Jack?" asked his brother.

"I called first on Father MacMahon to see the good old soul and our sister, and they told me of your being here."

"Ah! dear old Uncle Peter! It was well for you, Jack, when you became a special correspondent that you had an uncle in the Church."

"Faith you may say that, Hugh. That affair with the Carlists was a close shave."

"How was that, Mr. Brandon?" asked the basso, his curiosity becoming excited.

"Well, Signor, as I dare say my brother here may have told you, I was sent to Spain during the last Carlist war as special correspondent to the London *Daily Sentinel*. You may recollect, Hugh, when we were in the Zouaves, a fine young Spaniard, Colonel Almara. I heard before going out to Spain that he held a high command in the column operating against the Carlists. Now, as we specials have to run all manner of risks to get early and, if possible, exclusive news, I managed to get a letter conveyed to my old Zouave friend, now General Almara, asking for a free pass to move about without molestation in the part of the country held by their troops."

"You always were the very deuce for impudence," exclaimed Hugh.

"I never lost anything for want of asking, and generally got my reward. Sure enough the pass came. It was of great assistance to me for some time; but at last it nearly proved a pass for me into the other world."

"How was that, Mr. Brandon?" asked Roni.

"One day, when in the neighbourhood of Pampe-luna, I dropped across a Carlist band—"

"Say rather they dropped across you," put in his brother.

"It comes to the same thing. They made a prisoner of me, and, finding I spoke English, they concluded they had got hold of a famous spy, who was an Englishman. I declared I was not an Englishman at all, but an Irishman. All to no use; I was still detained a prisoner, but when I was searched and General Al-mara's pass found upon me, that settled the matter. I must surely be the celebrated English spy. The Carlist chief ordered me to be shot. Fortunately, the bloodthirsty vagabonds were tremendously pious too, so they gave me twenty-four hours to prepare for death.

"Pleasant that, Mr. Brandon," said Roni.

"The fortunes of war, signor. It was then I thought of my uncle, Father MacMahon, here in Liverpool."

"He declares you never think of him, Jack, unless you're in some one or other of the scrapes you are always getting into."

"That's a libel, Hugh. I'm his favourite, I declare, and I'm sure he'll leave me all he has."

This seemed such a capital joke that the two brothers laughed heartily. They then explained to Roni that such was the unbounded charity of the grand old *Soggarth* that, but for their sister Mary, who kept house for him and was his domestic tyrant, he would never leave himself the second shirt, nor, indeed, any shirt at all, if he could only manage without exciting attention to give what is generally considered such an indispensable article of apparel to some destitute fellow-creature who might seem in want of it.

"No," said Jack, "I will never see *his* name in that interesting column of the *Illustrated London News*, where you can find what the noble Lord Nosoo, or the rich Indian merchant, Mr. Rupee, died possessed of."

"Well, Mr. Brandon, you thought of your uncle."

"I did, and having plenty of money on my person, which I was allowed to use by my amiable Carlist friends during the short time I was for the world, I asked to be allowed to telegraph to Father MacMahon. Being, as I have said, pious brigands, they consented the more readily when they saw the message was to a priest. I recollected that our uncle Peter had for a long time been a professor at the Irish College at Rome, so I asked him to telegraph at once to Cardinal Paulo on my behalf, as I thought if anything could save my life it would be a message from Rome from a Prince of the Church. Father Peter lost not a moment in communicating with Rome; and Cardinal Paulo, who, like everybody that knows him, loves the old man, at once telegraphed to Spain on my behalf. I was right: the Carlists were too orthodox to resist such an appeal. In a few hours, I, who was to have been shot as a spy, was treated with all respect as the near connection of a Cardinal, for they thought 'twas he was my uncle; and, better still, I got a pass to come and go through the Carlist lines whenever I required."

"Just like you, Jack," said his brother. "No matter how ugly your fall appears to be, you are sure to come down on your feet, and even profit by your misfortune. But you will do this sort of thing once too often, I'm afraid."

"Never fear, Hugh. Well, signor, the consequence of what I have told you was that I outdistanced all the other "specials," who were as jealous as old Nick of me, and the *Sentinel* ran up to an unpreceden-

ted circulation while the war lasted."

"Why, now I remember," said Roni, "You must be the Brandon who was going to be shot in Cuba."

"The very man, signor. You may remember reading something, though not all, about it in the papers at the time."

"I was, you may recollect," continued John Brandon, "correspondent of the *New York Star*, the most enterprising undertaking in the world—in fact, as Uncle Sam himself would say, they beat creation. Why, they think nothing of sending a man on a mission to Central Asia, or the South Sea Islands, or to the North Pole on a voyage of discovery, just as some great nation possessing unbounded resources might do."

"Come, Jack, I'd leave the Yankees to blow their own trumpet. Our friend has heard all that before, I'll be bound."

"No, no, my dear fellow, you quite interest me," exclaimed Roni.

"Well, I was sent to Cuba during the insurrection there. I was picked out because I was known to have had a lot of experience of Spaniards through having seen service with the unfortunate Emperor Maximilian in Mexico. Well, I was anxious, as I always am, to do the best I could for my employers, so I used to break regularly through the opposing lines for the purpose of sending home news of the war. The Spaniards caught me two or three times, but I managed to get off unscathed through some plausible story of mine. At length I was told by old Navera, the Spanish Commander-in-Chief, that if I was caught again, I should certainly be shot. I *was* caught again, and sure enough was ordered for execution. I found means at once to communicate with the British Consul, demanding the protection of the British flag."

"That was cool, Jack, but quite worthy of you," said his brother. "seeing that some time before, when the *Habeas Corpus* Act was suspended in Ireland—"

"I was in danger of being suspended there, too," replied Jack. "Quite right. Well, you know that through that I had the reputation of being a bit of a rebel against British law. But what of that? If I had suffered so much from the *dis*-advantage of being what is called a British subject, there was, therefore, the more reason why I should profit from any advantage to be gained from it."

"And so you got British protection," said Roni.

"You shall hear. I sent, as I tell you, to the British Consul—"

"As bold as brass."

"Now, now, Hugh, are you telling this story or am I? I demanded British protection, and, much to my astonishment I must confess, a British man-o'-war was sent round, and I was demanded from the Dons."

"Who at once gave you up," said Roni.

"The devil a bit! Old Navera declared he would not let me go if the whole British fleet came for me; and do you know I admired the old boy's pluck."

"What! and he going to shoot you!"

"Well, I declare I got so excited about what seemed to be growing into a beautiful international quarrel that I forgot all about that."

"How was it they didn't shoot?"

"You may remember it."

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then in a somewhat disturbed state in Spain, and revolutions and pronunciamientos the order of the day, so that with the next turn of the political wheel of fortune I was liberated with a lot more prisoners."

"A most frightful ordeal for you," said Roni.

"Not at all, signor; when I got out of prison, I made a most delightful lot of acquaintances among the best society of Madrid. The consequence was I was just the man to send from the *Star* to "do" the late Royal Wedding there, and a jovial time I have had of it I can tell you, having only returned yesterday, on my way back to New York. But come, Hugh, pack up your traps for to-day, and you two fellows come and have a bit of dinner with me at my hotel."

As Mr. John Brandon's hotel was in the same street as the Princess' Theatre, the three young men sauntered leisurely along, chatting as they went in happy good-fellowship, with the light-heartedness characteristic of the artist nature.

Entering the hotel, Brandon had a pleasant word for all the attendants, male or female, they met, for he always made himself at home under every circumstance and in every society. This was how he had managed to push along so easily and so successfully through life.

After dinner they lit their cigars and strolled into the smoke room.

As they passed in, a man, with his back partially turned towards them, stood leaning over one of the tables, apparently in earnest conversation with another, who was seated behind the table.

Hugh and Roni had passed these two. As John followed something caused him to look aside. When exclamation of pleasure he recognised the man who sat behind the table. The man, at the same moment, bowed slightly.

to the other, and, moving quickly away, left the room without saying another word.

Hugh and Roni turned round immediately on hearing John's exclamation, and caught sight of the retreating figure.

"That's very like Luigi, the chorus singer," said Hugh to his friend.

"I didn't see his face. Do you know I don't like a bone in that same Luigi's body. There is some mystery about him, I'm sure. He cannot keep up the style he does on the pay of a chorus singer."

"So I should think."

"Everywhere our company travels he goes poking about, making all kinds of strange inquiries, and hang-dog looking fellows, evidently of his own country, keep coming after him before he is an hour in any place we go to."

"Strange he should know this friend of Jack."

Meanwhile, John Brandon and the stranger were fraternising like old acquaintances.

"Count Fritz! of all men in the world," exclaimed Jack, heartily extending his hand. "What brings you to Liverpool?"

"Nay, Brandon," said the other, cordially grasping the proffered hand. "'Tis I should ask that question. I have business here from our Embassy in London—to look into the case of some castaway Austrian sailors of ours—but you are——"

"Or ought to be abroad at this moment, you would say. But don't you know, too, that I am a bird of passage, so that you need not be surprised where I may turn up. We newspaper men will soon beat Shakespeare's Puck, who could—

'Put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes.'"

"Exactly. The last I heard of you was that you

had become a carpet knight among the *senoras* of Madrid. But come, sit down, man, and let us have a glass together. We have not met since we were both in Vienna."

"With all my heart. Hugh!—Signor Roni!"

"Friends of yours, Brandon? Of course. This is your artist brother, I can see by the likeness. Delighted to meet you. And your friend—Signor Roni, if I mistake not. *Your* face is known in most European capitals, so a formal introduction is scarcely necessary."

They now formed a sociable group around the table. After a while Hugh Brandon said to the Austrian—

"You know Luigi, one of the chorus singers in Roni's company?"

"Not that I am aware of."

"Did he not leave you as I came in?"

"Was that Luigi? I never saw the man before. He was merely asking me what time the next train started for London."

Count Fritz was, as John Brandon explained, an *attache* of the Austrian Embassy in London, whose acquaintance he had made in Vienna while the war was going on between Russia and Turkey.

The Austrian was a portly, well set-up, florid-looking man of some forty-five years, with a frank, off-hand manner, well calculated to attract to him men younger than himself.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Brandon," said he. "Your brother was a great favourite in Vienna, I assure you. Now, if he had chosen the soldier's trade, he would, in our service, have won his way to eminence, as many a countryman of yours has done before in the Austrian Army."

"Yes, but don't you know," replied Jack—

"The pen is mightier than the sword."

"You found it so, no doubt, for tough old Abdallah

Pasha, who defeated the best generals of Russia, surrendered to you at discretion."

"How was that?" asked Roni.

"There was nothing the old Turk detested more than the specials, for he had reason to think that the Russians got to know of the Turkish movements from the accounts these correspondents sent to the English, French, and German newspapers, so that if he got hold of one of them there was short shrift, I can tell you. Brandon was caught at last, but how he got round old Abdallah I could never make out, so perhaps he will let us hear the truth of the affair now."

"Certainly. Well, you heard how I fell into the trap like the other poor devils, and you fellows in Vienna thought it was all up with me."

"Not a doubt about it."

"Abdallah was then operating against the Montenegrins, and when I was stopped in my search for information, I was flung into a building, used for a temporary prison, in one of the ruined villages on their line of march. I was to be led out to be shot next morning, so during the night, from time to time, I kept saying a mouthful of prayers, while every now and then I found myself humming some strain of the 'old sod' I was never to see again. You may often observe that, even in the most critical hour of a man's life such a chain of ideas comes floating through the brain, one opening out into the other so unconsciously, that it is surprising to find how remotely the thoughts have been carried away from the idea that one would expect to find uppermost at the moment."

"Come, go along, Jack. Don't get into metaphysics."

"Easy, Hugh. Well, such was my case; but of course my thoughts would again come back to the position in which I was. I suppose it was the idea of impending *death*, and the same word occurring in what

is generally considered a bacchanalian song that caused me at fitful intervals to break forth—under my breath, of course—into the strains so familiar to most Irishmen—

‘And when grim *death* appears,
In a few but happy years,
To tell me that my race is run,
I’ll say—begone, you knave !
Great Bacchus gave me leave
To drink another Cruiskeen lawn.’

I was so lost in my own thoughts that I was unaware that after awhile I had an audience. But presently I heard a slight sound, and, looking towards the door, there, sure enough, was Abdallah Pasha himself, who had entered unperceived. He came over to me, slapped me on the back familiarly, and asked me what was the song I had been singing. I translated it for the old fellow as well as I could, and he seemed caught by the words. He then asked me to sing it again. For the honour of old Ireland I chanted it, giving it forth with all the vigour of which I was capable. The old boy kept time to the music with his hand, at the same time humming the chorus, which after a verse or two he mastered sufficiently to join in. I declare he even seemed to have seized the characteristics of the air—that stateliness, with the half-melancholy half-jovial strains you find in so much of our music—until at the last verse he joined so lustily in the chorus that we made the rotten old roof ring again with the unaccustomed strains of—

‘Gra machree, ma cruiskeen
Slantha gal, mavourneen,
Gra machree, ma cruiskeen lan.’

The whole affair now seemed to me so absurd that I burst out into uncontrollable laughter, in which the old Pasha joined me until the tears ran down his cheeks. Of course he could’nt think of having a soon

companion shot, so that I was forthwith liberated and taken into such high favour that during the rest of the campaign I could do as I liked, beside having the honour of dining with Abdallah himself every day."

"That's how it was then?" said the Austrian. "Well we were told at Vienna that the old Turk, hearing that you had seen some military service, actually offered you a command, besides half-a-dozen handsome wives, so that, if you had chosen, you might have been at this moment 'Brandon Pasha.'"

"My brother told you then we had seen a little military service in Italy?" said Hugh.

"Oh! yes; and do you know, Mr. Brandon, I went through the same campaign myself, as a volunteer in the Papal service."

"Then we are old companions in arms!"

"More than that, Hugh," added his brother.

"Fritz was a veteran in the service when we were only recruits, for some ten years before that he was at the defence of Spoleto, under O'Reilly."

The bond of fellowship became all the greater as each spoke—

"Of moving accidents by flood and field;

Of hairbreadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach."

And thus the time went on, until at length Hugh exclaimed—

"Come, Jack, you are forgetting good old Uncle Peter and Mary."

"To be sure. I promised to be back again this evening, for my time in Liverpool is but short."

"And I am due at the Princess's," added Roni.

"How quickly the time flies in pleasant company."

They then parted, Count Fritz remaining behind, as he was staying in the hotel.

Roni left the two brothers as they passed the Princess's Theatre.

"Well, Hugh," said John, as they walked along by themselves, "How fares your ward, the little Italian flower you picked up out of Homer's Garden?"

"Oh, yes, Mariana. Uncle Peter, a couple of years since, as you know, placed her in a good school, and she is, I believe, growing up a charming girl."

"You first met her with some of those wandering Italian musicians, I think."

"Yes. I was struck by the child's extraordinary beauty, and thought what a splendid model she would make for an infantile figure I wanted for a picture I had in hand at the time."

"Some high art affair, I'll be bound. Why don't you do something that will pay?"

"You know, Jack, I love my art too much to spend my time on mere 'pot boilers.'"

"I'm afraid you are too deficient in the commercial faculty ever to get on in the world. You will never make your fortune."

"Just what old Johnson, the doorkeeper at the Princess's, said to me this morning."

"And no wonder—a child could see it. You're too good-natured—too much wrapped up in the clouds for everyday life."

"Yes, but you cannot deny that I at least possess industry and perseverance. It is true the pictures I have painted have brought me but little, but I will yet attain fame."

"Look here, Hugh," exclaimed Jack, suddenly striking his brother on the back, "I'll tell you what. Make me your commercial agent. I'll guarantee both fame and fortune. Division of labour is now the system in every branch of industry. Let the artist and the man of business form a joint-stock company. If the artist has the right stuff in him, as you have, and the man of business is capable and honest, why then success is certain."

They were now passing the end of Homer's Garden.

"That's where the young Italian girl lived," said John.

"Yes, with a decent Irishman, named Muldowney."

"Did they ever find out who she was?"

"Never. Her mother came here some fifteen years since with this child. I never saw her myself, but I am told she was a woman of great beauty. From what Muldowney and the Italians who live in the neighbourhood say, she was also one who must have once moved in a high sphere of life, and who could only have been driven by stress of poverty to seek shelter amongst such coarse and humble surroundings."

"Your little Italian is quite a heroine. Take care of your heart, Hugh. Well, what else?"

"The mother, I am told, was very reticent, and the name she went by was thought not to be her own. After some time her health rapidly failed her. She now seldom ventured out—indeed, for some reason or another, I am told, she even seemed as if she feared going out into the streets. However, one day she had to go out on some errand, but in a short time came home again, apparently in a state of great terror, and, as Mrs. Muldowney said, 'with a hunted look in her face, and just for all the world as if she'd met a Banshee.' She never left the house again. She took to her bed and in a few days died. The whole Italian colony of Homer's Gardens followed her to the grave at the Old Swan, where at her daughter Mariana's request, I have lately had put up a simple slab to her memory. There were some trinkets of hers which Muldowney has got carefully put away, in the hope that these may some day throw some light on Mariana's antecedents. The child became the daughter of the whole colony, but it was honest Mrs. Muldowney who

insisted upon taking the part of a mother towards her. It was only when the true-hearted old soul heard I was nephew to Father MacMahon, she would allow Mariana to sit for me. As I told you it is about a couple of years since uncle Peter sent her to school. She is expected home this week for a short vacation, and will stay with my uncle and sister during the time."

"Quite a romance. But beware, Hugh, that this young Italian does not steal round your heart."

"Don't talk nonsense, Jack. She is but a child, and to speak seriously—I may as well tell you sooner as later—I am afraid my heart is gone, but in quite another quarter."

"Of course the lady is an angel—they always are, and if not it would be all the same, love being blind."

"If I could only summon up courage to speak to her, I feel that I might win her, for she is kindness itself, and I do think she likes me. The great obstacle is her father—that purse-proud old cotton-broker, who, I really believe, looks on a mere artist as a sort of half-vagabond only to be tolerated in good society,"

"Nonsense, my boy. I suppose the old fellow's money-bags have frightened you away. Do I know her?"

"Oh! yes. She and Mary were, you recollect, old schoolfellows. You recollect Rose Aylmer."

"Rose Aylmer—" was all Jack said in reply. A strange look of alarm stole over his face. It was, however, but for an instant. Hugh did not notice it, and as they just now came to their uncle's door, nothing further was said. Hugh was about to knock when the door suddenly opened.

An old woman, carrying a large bundle, was hurriedly making her way out, while a white-haired old priest held the door open for her to leave, at the same

time looking furtively over his shoulder.

"Oh! thin, may the blessin' of the widow and the orphan be upon your reverence!" exclaimed the woman.

She had scarcely spoken when the two Brandons, who as yet stood outside, were surprised to see their sister Mary, a fine, healthy-looking young lady, brushing past their uncle, and taking the old woman by the shoulders, while she exclaimed—

"What have you in that bundle? Come, let me know this minute."

"Sure, Father Pether himself gev it to me."

"Dont I know he did. Dont I know he'd give the very roof from over his head if I'd let him. Come bring that bundle in here at once."

Mary Brandon placed the bundle upon a table that stood in the passage, and opened it out so that she might see the contents. Meanwhile, Father Peter had hastily retired, and now stood, with a scared look, in the open doorway of their little parlour. "What's this?" exclaimed Miss Brandon, in horror. "The pair of blankets I've just missed from your bed! Do you want to starve yourself to death, Uncle Peter?"

"But, Mary, *agra*."

"Don't talk to me. I've no patience with you. One should be a saint to live with you." She was now rapidly turning over the other contents of the bundle. "And your only waistcoat, too! But what's this?" And she closed her eyes and leaned against the table as if overcome by the enormity of Father Peter's villainy.

"What's this?" *A pair of Father Brennan's stockings!* Oh! uncle, uncle, that it should ever come to this."

"But Mary, *achree*."

"Oh! Uncle Peter, what are you coming to? You

that preach such beautiful sermons ; that *you* of all men should become a *thief* ! Yes ; a thief, no less."

"But listen. Sure Father Brennan wont mind. Can't he have a pair of mine ?"

"Don't you know you haven't a pair of stockings but what's on your feet this minute, and even them you wouldn't have if I didn't watch you."

"But think of the comfort to her unfortunate family when the poor creature brings them home."

Just at that supreme moment of his misery Father Peter caught sight of his nephews laughing heartily at the scene, and never did besieged garrison more thankfully welcome relief than he. As their sister had seized upon the contents of the old woman's bundle, the brothers felt compelled, at Father Peter's intercession, to make up more than the value of what had been taken from her, so that the poor creature, who really was a deserving object, went on her way rejoicing after all.

The storm having happily blown over, there was soon a happy family group assembled in the little parlour.

Father Peter MacMahon was as fine a specimen of the good old Irish *Soggarth*, as you would see in a day's walk, as they say in Ireland. Though abounding in true wisdom, and learned (particularly in the literature of his own green island) beyond most men, he had a look of childlike simplicity in every feature, while upon his lips there was ever that sweet and placid smile which the old masters strove to produce when they would picture a saint. Even to *know* Father Peter was to feel one's self a better man. He attracted to him all hearts—more especially the hearts of the poor, his dearest children. He was never happier than when in Homer's Garden, which lay in the sphere of his ministrations. When he appeared

there the children rushed out and clasped his legs, and the women brought out their babies (who seemed to increase and multiply more wonderfully than all the other productions of the "Garden") who crowed and chuckled as the white-haired old priest pinched their cheeks; while around him gathered lovingly grown-up specimens of that cosmopolitan community—Matteo, or Karl, or Pat, or Bridget, as the case might be, with all of whom he was able to converse in their native tongue. Even those not of his own flock would go any length to serve him, and were willing to listen to his words of wisdom. Often when there was a real row, and No. 9, aided by all the constables from the surrounding beats could not cope with the disturbance, as a last resource, the cry would be—"Run for Father MacMahon," and when the well-known face appeared, the fiercest storm of strife would be quelled, and peace would again reign in Homer's Garden.

As they sat by the fireside the young men professed to be awfully scandalised at the scene they had just witnessed; all of which bantering Father Peter took in good part.

"Why, uncle," said Jack, "If you go on in this way I shall expect to see a paragraph in the papers some of these mornings headed—'Painful Case—Theft by a Clergyman.' That won't do, you know."

Somehow these attempts at cheerfulness on Jack's part seemed, on this evening, to come with an effort, as if something had suddenly dashed his spirits.

The old priest, really keener than any of the others, marked this, and said—"You seem jaded, Jack. You are beginning to feel tired, no doubt, first of all, by your long journey here, and then going about all day through Liverpool."

"Yes, I suppose I must be," he replied, and then from time to time he would make an effort to

brighten up, but for the remainder of the evening he was evidently not himself.

After a while, a light step was heard. The door opened, and a young girl bounded lightly in. There was a glow of health and pleasure on her cheek, the bloom of which and the beautifully-moulded features spoke more of Italy than of our colder northern lands.

"What, Mariana!" exclaimed Hugh. "They did not tell me that you had returned from school, but I suppose Mary forgot to let us know, being so busy with her detective business."

With the happy innocence of childhood, Mariana held up her cheek for Hugh to kiss, as she had been accustomed to do since she was a little child—almost a baby in fact.

"Oh, yes," said Mariana, "I came home this afternoon and we are to have a holiday for a whole month—only think!"

"And this is our Mariana, then," said Jack, cheerily, who had never seen the little maiden before, but who now, as he clasped her dainty little hand, with his great strong fingers, soon made his way into her good graces.

"And so you are uncle Jack," she said, looking up at him pleasantly, and nestling herself between the two brothers, where, while they remained, she seemed a perfect picture of happiness, and never seemed to tire of starting some new subjects for conversation.

Later on, Hugh and John Brandon, after taking a dutiful and affectionate farewell, left together. As a portion of their way was in the same direction, they conversed as they went along.

"I have an idea for you, Hugh."

"What is it?"

"There is both wealth and renown for you if you

can only succeed in putting Mariana's face upon the canvas just as it is."

"My own thoughts exactly."

"I will give you a theme. What think you of the young Juliet of Shakspeare in the freshness and brightness of youth?"

"And Mariana for the Juliet."

"Set about it, Hugh, at once, and take my word for it, you may soon leave your scene-painting aside once and for all."

After this they were silent, each being lost in his own thought, until they came to the point where their several roads parted—Hugh to his lodging in the eastern suburbs, and Jack to his hotel.

When John Brandon retired to his room, a short time after this, he closed the door and flung himself into a chair. To see that look of anguish on his face you would scarcely have recognised the joyous, high-spirited young fellow he had appeared during the day.

But from the moment his brother had pronounced the name of Rose Aylmer he was a changed man.

He, too, loved Rose Aylmer.

But now, now, this secret, never breathed to mortal, must die with him, lest it should stand in the way of his brother's happiness.

It was all the more bitter now, as he had never told his love, for under that off-hand manner there was a keenly sensitive nature. He knew that old Aylmer's heart was centred in gold, and that he would value no man's alliance with his daughter unless he possessed wealth. John Brandon had, since the years of his youth, with the one object constantly before him, struggled manfully for riches, and had succeeded. He valued wealth little for its own sake, but that through its means, if he were happy enough to

win Rose Aylmer's heart, he could then go boldly to her father and claim her hand.

He had often thought—but then, perhaps, he was only deceiving himself—that, while yet a youth, there was something in Rose's manner towards him that led him to hope he might one day speak to her what he felt, without leaving in the power of her purse-proud father to drive him away as a mere adventurer.

He had actually come to Liverpool this time determined to seize an opportunity of endeavouring to win the prize he had so long, with silent heroism, struggled for. But now, it can never be. It was a hard battle; but the noble spirit conquered, and the sacrifice must be made. Whatever of joy there was left in life for him now should be in the knowledge of his brother's happiness. In the excitement of battles and stirring scenes in far-off lands he would try to forget his misery.

He threw himself upon the bed, but no sleep came to him. Through the long, weary hours, that seemed as if they would never come to an end, he watched for the dawn. At length, just as day began to break, exhausted nature claimed her own, and he slept for a few hours.

He was wakened by a knocking at his door.

He rose quickly and opened it.

"Beg your pardon, sir," said a waiter who stood outside, "but being a telegram, I took the liberty of wakening you thinking it might be important."

He thanked the man and opened the telegram.

It was from the *New York Star*, and it said—

"War broken out in South Africa. Correspondent wanted to start immediately. Will you go?"

John Brandon, without a moment's delay, hurried to the telegraph office and sent his answer.

It was one word—"Yes."

CHAPTER IV.—TRACKED.



It was with something amounting to consternation that John Brandon's relatives and friends heard of his determination to start immediately on his mission to South Africa.

They were, however, used to these sudden leavetakings in the course of his adventurous career, but little dreamt on the present occasion of the sudden sorrow which had come upon him, and which had impelled him to go forth a wanderer in a foreign land.

He had no time to lose in order to be able to reach the scene of operations, so as to be of service to the journal which employed him, and as he had to proceed to London before finally starting on his journey, he was obliged to take his departure from Liverpool in a few hours after he had sent off his telegram accepting the engagement of the *Star*.

On the same evening, our venerable friend, Antonio, is standing at Mr. Muldowney's door in Homer's Garden, and by his outward appearance it is evident that a change for the better has taken place in his fortunes.

This has been due to the good offices of Hugh Brandon with Mr. Beronti, who, finding that the old man really possessed genius and a knowledge of art that was really surprising in one of his apparent position, at once adopted the suggestion of the young painter by setting Antonio to some more congenial work than the selling of images—

Hugh also helped him by advancing a small sum, with which, at a ready-made clothing-shop, he was enabled to procure some decent articles of attire.

He is telling Mick of his good fortune, while at the

same time he looks with curious eyes at the various itinerant performers and vendors of merchandise who are returning home from their day's labour. A large proportion of these, he can see, are his own countrymen who hoard up their earnings that they may, some day, return home to enjoy the fruits of their years of hardship. Those who come to Liverpool naturally gravitate to Homer's Garden, which through many reminiscences of the locality, is better known in some of the humbler homes among the hills of Lucca than it may be to many residents of Liverpool.

Here comes, toiling up the street, after his day's wanderings, a man with a hand-organ on which is perched a monkey, while a more elaborate instrument is being drawn into a coal-yard by Pietro, or Giacomo, or Giovanni, as the case may be.

Olive-tinted girls, dressed in the Italian costume, come following after, carrying their tambourines which serve the double purpose of accompanying the music and collecting the coppers of the audience, when they are fortunate enough to secure one.

Into dark cellars swarthy men carry large cans which, in the morning, have gone forth filled with 'ice-cream.' The gaily-painted trucks on which these are wheeled about have, during the day, figured at East-ham or New Brighton, these perambulating stores being principally patronised by our country-cousins, the cheap-trippers, whose appetite for penny ices would certainly suffer if they saw where they were manufactured.

Now and then, but very rarely, among the sons and daughters of "Sunny Italy" you may meet a face of classic mould, but, for the most part, men, women, boys, and girls have a very low physique; on which hardships, exposure to all weathers, and too often hunger, have left their traces; while their taw-

dry finery is generally grotesque rather than picturesque.

In addition to the foreign element, there are native artists also, with their appliances. Chief among these is the real old temple of the drama, in which that frightfully depraved but comical old ruffian, Punch, with the inevitable Toby, and the other members of the *corps dramatique*, perform for the admiration of the multitude. On this same summer evening Antonio may see this time-honoured though weather-beaten Temple carried into one of the larger houses of Homer's Garden, in charge of the 'sole lessee and manager,' who, with his partner, works the oracle; and for all we know these may be the veritable Codlins and Short who delighted little Nell and her grandfather in Dickens' 'Old Curiosity Shop.'

Farther on comes a Highlander (from Cork) with his bagpipes; a group of acrobats with various shabby hats and caps as headgear, and no less shabby long, loose coats over their fleshings; a blind man and his dog; a troupe of burnt-cork niggers (now looking somewhat piebald after the day's heat), in garments of the loudest patterns; and a number of other strollers, such as any day may be found on the sands at New Brighton and Southport.

Antonio can see that Homer's Garden, besides supplying such intellectual treats for the mind and dainties for the palate of the general public, does not neglect the creature comforts of its own residents.

Besides such perambulating stores as Mick Muldowney's, there is no scarcity of shops for eatables and drinkables.

Chief among the last is the 'Garrick Arms,' the gorgeous establishment of Mr. Stubbs, who is rather popular in the neighbourhood, notwithstanding the fact that, three times a week, he is denounced at the 'Holy

Lamp round the corner, as a brand for burning in a certain hot shop, by Mr. Howler, the celebrated teetotal orator and "converted clown."

In the back parlour of the "Garrick Arms," on the same evening the Italian chorus-singer, Luigi, is seated. He cannot possibly remain long as he has to go on in "Trovatore," the piece for the evening at the "Princess's." Nevertheless, there he sits, and with him Giacomo, an organ-man, both with full glasses before them. Luigi has evidently been fraternising with his fellow-countryman.

"Well," said he, "I have little time to say any more to you this evening, but I want you to find out all you can about this old Antonio. I am not yet sure of his identity, but if he is the man I take him to be you will be doing a good action by helping to restore him to his friends."

"Yes, signor. You are, I am sure, a benevolent gentleman, and I will help you all I can."

Luigi, with his hooked nose, eyes closely set together, and other features to correspond, would, it might strike a member of the theatrical profession, make a capital Mephistopheles, without any "making-up." He was, therefore, not exactly the kind of man to strike one as being the personification of the virtue Giacomo credited him with, but then he had dropped a half-sovereign into the organ-man's hand, and after such a practical proof of benevolence there was no resisting such evidence.

They parted—Luigi to his professional duties at the Princess's Theatre, and Giacomo to *his* in Homer's Garden.

For on a pleasant summer evening, it was no unusual sight to see Giacomo or some other of his friends grinding out his music, while the Gardeners, young and old, came forth after a brief interval for rest and

refreshment, to join in the inspiriting dance with rare enjoyment ; verifying the old adage that—

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.

However varied their nationalities, all were drawn together in light-hearted revelry, under the powerful spell of music (indifferent though it was)—one of the languages understood by all mankind.

On the narrow sidepath the dancers whirled round in waltzes and polkas, varied occasionally by reels and jigs.

Dancing seemed to come natural to the Gardeners (just as, we are told, swimming does to the South Sea Islanders), for the little children, who could scarcely toddle, turned round in pairs, and even the infants in arms clapped their hands and kept time most admirably to the music.

All the while No. 9 looked on admiringly. They are, perhaps, making an obstruction, but as no one complains, he is only too glad not to interfere, for this is the mood in which he likes his humble friends the best.

He is telling Mick (Antonio having gone off on some business of Mr. Beronti's) that the roughs who had assaulted the old man had got a month's imprisonment each for their playfulness on the preceding day.

Mick, meanwhile, looks approvingly on the scene before him. He is evidently one who thinks that—

The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils.

To Mick the scene before him is a reminder of his young days, when at the cross-roads, on a Sunday summer afternoon, the "neighbours" assembled and danced with the joyous exuberance of their Celtic temperament to the stirring music of the pipes or fiddle.

Mick feels himself a "boy" once more—footing it gaily on the barn door "forninst" his bright-eyed Kitty.

It is only his native politeness that has caused him to listen so long to No. 9, but at length he can no longer resist the pleasing contagion.

It seems to him a pity such good music 'should be wasted,' for out he rushes into the street and good-humouredly seizing old Mrs. Jacobs, the Jewess, he dashes into the throng, shouting—"Rise it, Jackymo ! ye divil !"

And Giacomo does 'rise it' accordingly, striking up a rattling jig that sends Homer's Garden into a very whirlwind of excitement.

In the midst of the revelry, Mariana and Mary Brandon are seen entering Homer's Garden, and are received with respectful admiration. Her fellow country-people in particular crowd around the young Italian girl, and are delighted at her improved appearance. During the two years of her absence from amongst them, she has grown from a pretty child into a beautiful girl, and if the little lady, for such she is, had dropped from another sphere they could not be prouder of her.

Miss Brandon and Mariana make their way to Muldowney's door, where the *vanithee* herself is looking on at her spouse's eccentricities, and with an air of comical gravity, holding up her hands and shaking her head, as much as to say that Mick is a hopeless case, declaring at the same time "an ould fool is the worst fool."

The good old soul now caught sight of her foster-child, and, running over to her, affectionately threw her arms round her neck and kissed her over and over again.

She then brought her into her tidy little parlour, where already Mary Brandon had preceded them and was critically surveying, as was her custom, Mrs. Mul-

downey's household arrangements, about which the two sometimes had very tough but yet friendly battles.

Miss Brandon had not waited for Mrs. Muldowney's invitation to 'take off her things,' but was at once quite at home, as was evidenced from the fact she had already gone to the corner cupboard and was busy taking out the cups and saucers, and generally initiating a feast in honour of the young girl's return to her humble friends.

As Mariana looked round at every well-remembered ornament and picture and piece of furniture that formed the *lares* and *penates*—the household gods of Mrs. Muldowney—tears of happiness welled up into her eyes, while she threw her arms round the neck and kissed her almost more than mother, who had rescued her, when a poor little waif, from the fate of thousands in that great city.

Meanwhile the revelry goes on outside with undiminished vigour, and the light-hearted Gardeners proceed, heedless of the fact that through the still evening air they can hear at the "Holy Lamp," round the corner, the blatant tones of the "Converted Clown" breathing fire and brimstone, and denouncing them as wretched sinners on whose heads the vials of wrath shall be poured out.

CHAPTER V.—THE PRINCESS'S THEATRE AGAIN.—
FOLLOWING UP THE SCENT.



ANTONIO, grateful to his protector, called upon Hugh Brandon at the theatre as often as the nature of his duties at Mr. Beronti's, the image-man, would permit. He seemed to greatly enjoy the surroundings of the place, and Brandon was every day surprised to discover in his venerable friend

some new evidence of superior cultivation.

He introduced him to Mr. Dobson, the manager, to Signor Valeriani, the conductor, and to the various employes of the theatre, and Antonio rapidly won his way into their favour. The conductor in particular declared he should be his fast friend for life. On one occasion at rehearsal Signor Valeriani found that the band parts of one of the pieces of the opera announced for the evening had been lost or mislaid. What made the hiatus more awkward was that the score, containing, of course, the whole of the music, vocal and instrumental, could not be had.

It was now that Antonio crowned himself with everlasting honour in the eyes of Signor Valeriani by modestly and quietly offering to do his best to supply something to take the place of the missing parts, keeping as far as he could to the original from memory.

The conductor was incredulous, and still more so were the artists. However, in a much shorter time than possibly could have been expected, he first astonished and then delighted Valeriani by placing in his hands music which the Signor declared was almost equal to the original by a famous composer.

One of the loudest in praise of Antonio's ability was Luigi, the chorus-singer, who sought every opportunity of drawing the old man into conversation, particularly about Italy, and of events that had occurred many years before.

Although the old man was studiously polite to Luigi, as he was to everybody, he never encouraged these intimacies, and it might have been concluded that he had no knowledge of the men and scenes the chorus-singer was trying to recall to his mind.

The visit of the opera company was now drawing to a close. But two nights more remained before they appeared in Dublin on the following Monday.

Luigi was one of the first on this particular day to leave the theatre after rehearsal. Looking down the narrow street that flanked the theatre, he saw a man waiting for him whom he had evidently expected. Simply looking aside at the man with a quick movement of the eye to show he had observed him, the chorus-singer walked on without further sign of recognition, passing into the main thoroughfare. All the while the man followed him, but at such a distance as not to appear to do so.

Luigi turned into one of the streets at the upper end of London Road, and, knocking at the door of a tolerably decent looking house, was in a few moments admitted, and entered the parlour.

Shortly after a knock was heard. The door was opened and the question asked—

"Does Signor Luigi live here?"

"Yes."

"Can I speak to him?"

"I don't know. He has just come in from rehearsal. Who shall I say wants him?" asked the girl.

The man hesitated for a moment, and then said in a loud voice, so as to be heard in the parlour—

"Oh, say it is Creppi."

He stood in the passage while the girl knocked at the parlour door. Luigi opened it and motioned the man to enter.

"It is all right, Jane" he said, "the gentleman is a friend of mine."

The stranger entered, and the door being closed, Jane went to close the front door also, muttering to herself—

"Gentleman, indeed! I can't say as I cares much for such gentlemen. What a black-looking fellow! I wouldn't meet him in a lonely place on a dark night for a year's wages."

Meanwhile the two Italians, for Luigi's friend is a countryman of his own, are conversing inside.

"Well?" said Luigi.

"I have been talking to Giacomo this morning."

"Any clue yet?"

"I think so."

"What is it?"

"This photograph," said the man called Creppi; "I got it from Giacomo. He found it on the table in the room where the old man sleeps. He had left it out by accident."

"It must be returned before he misses it. Let me see the likeness."

Creppi handed Luigi the photograph, which was enclosed in what had once been a handsome morocco case, now considerably worn. He opened it and disclosed the likeness of a noble looking lady, who might be judged to have about turned her twentieth year.

"Is the face familiar to you?" asked Creppi.

"It is so long since. I think we are on the right track though."

"There may be something on the back of the likeness."

"Right; let us see?"

Luigi, with nimble fingers, was not long in taking the photograph out. Turning it over, he looked at the back.

There was some writing! He exclaimed "Ha! I thought so. See!" and he displayed the back of the photograph to Creppi.

There was a savage gleam of intelligence and of triumph in the eyes of the two men, as for a moment they stood fixedly regarding each other.

At length Creppi asked—

"When is it to be done?"

"To-night, if possible."

"He seems to be ever on his guard. I have fol-

lowed him about for the last ten days, and, even if we had known him to be the right man, there would have been no opportunity without danger to one's self."

"He is wily as a fox," said Luigi. From the first moment I saw him mending his images I thought he was our man ; but some twenty years change men so."

"You tried to draw him on to speak of Rome ?"

"Oh, yes ; and dropped, as if casually, names well known to him, just to see the effect ; but all to no purpose. I could never take him unawares."

"Just as I found him," said Creppi. "I followed him home to Homer's Garden and to Beronti's, and wherever he has gone, but it was all no use. He never leaves the principal streets if he can avoid it."

"As if he knew he was followed."

"Yes. If any one attacked him, and he cried out, there would be scores of people brought around in a moment."

"That would not do. Now, take this photograph to Giacomo. Tell him to put it back exactly where he got it before the old man misses it. Say that we believe Antonio is the old gentleman we want, and that if we can only restore him to his friends, he, Giacomo, shall be well rewarded."

Creppi then took his departure. In London Road he met Giacomo grinding out "The last Rose of Summer" to a very limited audience.

Creppi went over to the organ-men as if to give him a penny, at the same time placing the photograph in his hand.

There were a few words interchanged, and Creppi walked away.

Giacomo only waited to finish the air he was engaged upon, when he flung the strap over his shoulder, and, lifting up his organ, quickly made his way back to Homer's Garden.

That was a brilliant night at the Princess's Theatre, and fashionable Liverpool was well represented.

Hugh Brandon did not often come down to the theatre at night, but on this particular occasion there was something requiring his attention,

He was standing by the prompter at the close of the play. The leading singer was being called before the curtain. As one of the scene-shifters pulled the curtain aside to let the lady pass, Hugh glanced into the body of the house and caught sight of some friends in the stalls—a young lady, an old gentleman, apparently her father, and a young gentleman who appeared to be paying marked attention to the lady.

The curtain was held aside but for a moment, but brief as was the time, it enabled Hugh to see it was Rose Aylmer and her father, and with them an old college friend, Stephen Talbot, who, though yet young, was already a wealthy man in the cotton trade.

As the piece was over and the audience rapidly departing, Hugh made his way round to the colonnade outside, where the carriages were waiting.

In a few moments his friends appeared, Rose leaning on Talbot's arm, and the old gentleman by their side.

Miss Aylmer looked pleased at seeing Hugh, and gave him a cordial greeting, as did also Talbot, who seemed a frank and manly-looking young fellow. Old Mr. Aylmer, although he tried not to show it did not seem over pleased at seeing Brandon. He was eminently polite in his manner, but there was a stiffness about it which was unmistakeable.

As father and daughter drove away in their carriage the old gentleman said—

“My dear, I wish that scene-painting fellow would not keep hanging about after you.”

“Mr. Brandon! Oh, father, you know he is an

artist and a gentleman. Besides, his sister Mary is my truest friend."

"Oh, I dare say he is a respectable young fellow enough, but then compare him with young Talbot. Now there's the man anyone might be proud of as a son-in-law."

"Oh! father how you do go on with such nonsense," said Miss Rose, smiling, "I am not getting so old that you should want to get rid of me. Besides," and here a sad look stole over her face, "I think I shall never marry."

"Tut, tut, my dear. You must not get such an idea into your head, or I shall begin to think you are becoming low-spirited in reality. You seem a little dull lately, and that is why I asked you to the opera to-night."

"Like the kind and considerate dear old father that you are."

"Now there's Talbot," continued the old gentleman, sticking to his theme, "a fine dashing young fellow, making lots of money, and no one bearing a higher character on 'Change. That's the sort of man to make a good husband."

"I am glad to hear of Mr. Talbot's prosperity, for indeed he has always been a favourite of mine."

"Now just compare him with those Brandons. They are gentlemanly young fellows if you will; but this Hugh, now, that has just left us. I am quite sure he is not coining at his profession; and to make matters worse, he has such an easy-going, not to say improvident disposition. You may be sure he will never make his fortune."

"Just what everybody says of him. But I don't believe it," said Rose stoutly. "He has industry, and the gift to make his way in the world, as well, I am sure, in spite of his almost too generous disposition."

"And then there's the other one, John, that's just gone rushing off to South Africa. I must admit that if the fellow would only settle down he might get on. He is the greatest hand at a bargain I ever met with. You may remember, my dear, that commission I gave Hugh, last year. There was no price named for the picture, because, to do him justice, the young fellow is reasonable. I am sure he would not have said more than £50 for it, but, in the meantime, his brother comes home, and declares I shall not have it for less than £250; and, more than that, I had to pay it, for the picture had caught my fancy."

As the Aylmers were conveyed homeward, the two young men, Talbot and Brandon, walked along, arm in arm, talking of their old school days.

They had gone rather more than half a mile from the theatre when Hugh observed a man standing upon the opposite side, at the corner of a dark, narrow street, and looking furtively—now down the side street, and then along the main road by which the two friends were approaching. Hugh at once recognised Luigi. He had scarcely done so when a cry of terror was heard from the dark street.

"Some poor fellow in peril," exclaimed Talbot.

"Sounds like it," replied Hugh, as they both ran across to Luigi, who at once recognised Brandon.

"Something wrong going on here," he cried, as he joined the other two, and they all three ran down the street.

About fifty yards off two men were struggling—one a strongly built fellow with an uplifted knife in his hand, the other an old man, but still clinging with the strength of despair to the raised arm of his assailant.

The would-be assassin, finding there was help approaching, now flung off the old man, and ran up a passage a few yards off.

"Look to the old man, and leave this fellow to me," shouted Luigi, rushing up the passage with great speed in pursuit. They raised the fallen man, and found him not much hurt, though a good deal shaken after his perilous adventure.

It was Antonio, who within a few days had to thank Hugh Brandon, first for protection against brutal violence, and now for the preservation of his life.

In a few minutes Luigi returned, panting, and informed them that the rascal had somehow given him the slip.

CHAPTER VI.—THE FACE OF THE DEAD.



ANTONIO seemed so much shaken and alarmed at the attempted assassination that Hugh Brandon thought it best to take him home with him to his lodgings, which were not far off.

To facilitate matters Luigi volunteered to go to Muldowney's to tell them not to expect the old man home that night—otherwise they might be uneasy at his absence.

This was agreed to, so that Luigi having started on his mission, and Talbot having bade them good night, the artist's lodgings were soon reached.

When Mrs. Tompkins, Brandons landlady, opened the door for them, she was not at all surprised at her lodger appearing with a companion, even at so late an hour; for the hospitality of the young fellow was unbounded, and used sometimes to cause her serious inconvenience. But this she gladly overlooked, for,

she declared, he was "a real good sort;" and well she might, for whenever she was pinched for a quarter's rent, or in any other difficulty, the young Irishman, if he had it at all, or could get it for her, used to help her with the heart of a prince.

"Good night, Mrs. Tompkins," said Hugh, cheerily; "I have brought you another lodger you see."

"Quite right, Mr. Brandon. Let me see; where shall I put him?"

"Put him?" Why put him in my own room, of course."

Antonio protested against this.

"And where do you intend to sleep yourself?" asked Mrs. Tompkins.

"Oh! anywhere. I have it. Can't you make up a bed in my studio? There's plenty of room, and I shall be ready to take a turn at my picture as soon as I open my eyes in the morning."

The old Italian also objected to this, and ultimately Mrs. Tompkins, by dint of a little contrivance, found that she could manage to make Antonio comfortable without disturbing Brandon, or turning his studio from its proper use.

At supper Hugh pressed his guest to partake heartily of the comfortable meal set before them, but though the old man forced himself to eat a little, just to please his host, it was evident that a mortal terror had overcome him.

Hugh endeavoured to cheer him up, but, with all his efforts, had most of the conversation to himself. At length, struck with old Antonio's appearance, he said—

"Why, man, you look as if you had seen a ghost."

"Truly, Mr. Brandon, I feel somewhat shaken."

"And no wonder. Yon never were nearer death since the hour you were born. What could have
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been the motive? Robbery, I suppose."

"I do not think so."

"You have some idea, then, of another cause for the attack upon you?"

The old man did not answer for a moment. At length he said—

"Who can say?"

"Have you any enemy?"

"There are few who have not."

"It was somewhat strange that Luigi should have been at the corner of the street just at the time."

"Do you know, Mr. Brandon, his seems a face I could imagine I had known for many years, and yet I cannot recall to mind where I fancy I have seen him."

"By the way, how came you down that dark street?"

"In the company of the man who attacked me. He called at Mr. Beronti's and asked that somebody might go with him to repair a valuable casting which had been broken. He was, he said, the mate of a vessel, and the casting had to be carefully packed into a case early in the morning, as the ship he belonged to had to sail on the following day. The casting, he said, was the property of the captain, who valued it highly. It had got broken accidentally, and it was necessary to have it repaired without his knowledge. I happened to have some business with Mr. Beronti at the time, and he desired me to take the necessary implements and materials and go with the man."

"It was a complete trap, then."

"It was. I had not at first observed it, for the man spoke remarkably good English; but I was not long in his company until I came to the conclusion he was an Italian. I noticed that we were not going in the direction where I always understood foreign seamen boarded, and this I thought somewhat strange.

When he turned down the dark street where you found so my suspicions became excited, and I watched closely all his motions without appearing to do so, more particularly when I saw him several times trying to fall behind me. At length, finding, I suppose, that he could get no better opportunity, he suddenly drew from his breast a knife, but so closely had I watched him that almost at the same instant I grasped him by the wrist to prevent him striking, and called as loudly as I could for help. He was a powerful man, and you and your friend, as you saw, did not arrive a moment too soon."

"It was, indeed, a close shave. You say you don't think the intention was robbery?"

"No."

"It is a most mysterious affair. Can you not think of a motive?"

Antonio hesitated before answering. He evidently preferred being reticent on the point in question. He simply answered Hugh's inquiry by saying—

"Of many, Mr. Brandon; but these all may be fancies. Who can say?"

They soon after parted for the night.

Next morning Brandon was up early, and dressing himself, went quietly up stairs where his studio was situated. As he was passing the door of Antonio's bedroom he could hear that the old man was already stirring.

He, therefore, knocked gently at the door, which was opened by Antonio himself fully dressed.

"You are an early riser, like myself, signor" said the young man, with a hearty greeting.

In answer to Hugh's further inquiries Antonio said he felt much better after his night's rest.

"You are fond of pictures, I think, Signor Antonio, so you would perhaps like to have a peep into my

studio. Just between sleeping and waking, before I rose from bed this morning, I got an idea I want to put into a picture I am engaged upon."

"I have often noticed, Mr. Brandon, that is the time when the imagination has the fullest play."

They now entered the studio, and Antonio viewed some fine pictures, besides models and other appliances, with great interest and pleasure.

Meanwhile, Hugh had taken the cover off a picture which stood on an easel in a good light near the window, and was now hard at work upon it. The subject was evidently that suggested by his brother—the idea that was to bring him fame and fortune. It was Mariana in the soft loveliness of her early youth, represented in the garb of Shakespeare's Juliet, looking out from a window of the princely mansion of the Capulets, in the fair city of Verona.

After a few moments Antonio came round to where Brandon was at work, and no sooner did he see the picture when, with an exclamation of astonishment, he seized Brandon by the wrist, eagerly asking—

"What is this I see?—Bianca's face! Oh, tell me does she still live?"

"Of what Bianca do you speak?"

The old man hesitated. He was silent for a few moments. At length he seemed to have made up his mind.

"I was speaking of a daughter long since lost to me. The face in your picture reminds me of her, Mr. Brandon."

"The subject is, as I dare say you are aware, from one of Shakespeare's plays. The female figure is painted from a young Italian girl who was left an orphan, some fifteen years since, at Muldowney's, in Homer's Garden."

"Heavens! Can this be Bianca's child! She ex-

pected soon to become a mother when last I saw her."

Antonio now produced from his breast pocket the morocco case we have seen in the possession of Luigi. He opened it with eager hands, and showed the likeness to Hugh.

"This is, from what you tell me, all I am afraid that is left to me of my lost daughter. Is there not a resemblance to your picture?"

"Undoubtedly: they might have been taken from the same model."

"Your picture is exactly what Bianca was at that age."

"This must be looked to. Fortunately, Mariana is now at home from school, and you can see her this morning."

They made a hurried meal, both men being anxious to clear up the mystery which had arisen from the extraordinary resemblance between the picture and the photograph.

"There are some few trifling articles at Muldowney's which belonged to Mariana's mother. These, no doubt, will be of assistance. We must go there first."

"I am afraid it would not be safe to go there at all. My enemy must have tracked me there," said Antonio, his former nervousness becoming again painfully apparent.

"You have an enemy then?"

"I have— a relentless enemy, who for a score of years has followed me over land and sea."

"For what object?"

"My life."

"This is strange. You are not what you seem. Tell me—you can trust me—who are you?"

"I dare not. Think of me only as Antonio, whom you have befriended."

"Then let us go to my uncle's first. Your enemy

can scarcely have heard of him in connection with you."

Together then they left the house, Hugh telling Mrs. Tompkins they would not be home before night. As they went along he said to Antonio—

"You had better remain at my lodgings for the present until we can make some arrangements for your future safety. But that we saw a real attempt upon your life last night, I would be inclined to think you the victim of a terrible hallucination."

"No, no, it is too true."

"It was fortunate, then, that you came with me last night, for now the man has lost sight of you."

"Perhaps."

Hugh now called a car, and directed the driver to take them to Father MacMahon's.

Antonio, who sat on the front seat, facing Brandon, still seemed terribly uneasy. From time to time he rose and looked through the small pane in the back of the car. At length he exclaimed—

"We are followed!"

"Nonsense, man. Your enemy could not have known where you passed the night."

"Still I am sure we are followed by another car. I have been watching, as you may have seen, since we started, and every turn we have taken the other car has still kept us in view."

"Perhaps you are right. It is better, then, to take some precaution. Suppose we drive to Roni's hotel."

Brandon having given the necessary directions, the driver now altered his course. After a while he glanced out of the small window at the back.

"I believe we are followed," he exclaimed. "Is that the car you saw before?"

"Yes."

"Then we are followed, sure enough."

In a few minutes more they stopped at the Poly-National Hotel. Brandon told the driver to wait for half an hour, in case he should be wanted again.

Roni was at breakfast, and pressed them to join him. Hearing they had already breakfasted, he asked them to be seated close to his table, that they might converse at the same time.

When they told him what had happened he was naturally much astonished.

"Why, Signor Antonio," he said, "you are becoming quite a hero."

"A confoundedly unpleasant part to play, it seems to me," said Hugh.

"And so," asked Roni, "you tumbled across Luigi last night, just in the nick of time?"

"Yes, he was standing at the corner of the street where the attack was made."

"The man got clear off, then, before you got a good view of his face?"

"Yes, but I noticed that he was a brawny fellow though somewhat undersized, I thought."

"And you think you were tracked from your lodging this morning?"

"I was at first incredulous when Antonio called my attention to it, but I have now no doubt of it."

"That appears the strangest part of it, though not so strange if a surmise I have be correct. You, Signor Antonio, had a better opportunity of noting the man who attacked you than Brandon had. You were in his company a short time previously. Now answer me a few questions."

"Yes, Signor Roni."

"The man who came for you to Beronti's was somewhat under the middle size, but strongly built?"

"He was."

"Dark hair—olive complexion?"

"Yes; like most Italians."

"Had somewhat the appearance of a seaman?"

"Yes, I thought so. Indeed, he said he was the mate of a vessel."

"Ah, well, we are not bound to believe that on the fellow's own testimony. Did he wear rings in his ears as you sometimes see the fashion among foreign seamen?"

"Let me see. Yes, yes; I believe he did."

"Had lost three fingers from his left hand?"

"The very man, Signor Roni!"

"I thought so."

"I did not notice the loss of the fingers until he had attacked me and caught me by the throat. I now distinctly remember feeling the grasp but of the thumb and one finger by which he tried to hold me, for, with the strength of desperation, old as I am, I was able, with my left hand, to release his grasp from my throat."

"This is wonderful," said Hugh. "You know the assassin, then, Roni?"

"Easy. You say you were tracked from your lodging this morning, Hugh?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Who knew of your taking Antonio home with you?"

"Stephen Talbot and Luigi."

"Then I think I can lay my hand on the assassin."

"Who is it?"

"Our friend Luigi."

"Impossible! This is too horrible!"

"It is too true. You may remember my telling you I thought him a suspicious character?"

"You did."

"And of the hang-dog looking fellows always

lurking about after him?"

"Yes."

"Well, I may tell you that yesterday morning, as I was going to rehearsal, I saw the very fellow I have described hanging about in the side street near the theatre. I thought little more of it until I was coming away, which was immediately after Luigi. Indeed so close was I to him that as we left the stage-door he was walking immediately in front of me. I could not see his face, but as I came to the corner of the street I could see the stranger was still there, and in his face a look of intelligence as his eyes were directed to Luigi that convinced me some sign had passed between the two.

"I appeared to take no notice, but followed on behind Luigi, somewhat slackening my pace. I was curious to see what would come of the affair. I therefore stopped short, when we came into the main street a little distance, as if to look into a shop window. After a little time I turned back the way I had come, and, sure enough, my customer was coming along, evidently following Luigi."

"I think," said Brandon to Antonio, "you have some recollection of having seen this chorus-singer before?"

"It seems like a dream to me that in Italy and elsewhere I have seen such a face."

"I am afraid it is only too true. You must be right, Roni. It is now our turn to hunt him down."

"You left the car at the door?"

"Yes."

"Right. If Luigi be watching, as I suspect he is, we may throw him off the scent. He, most likely does not think you are aware of being watched."

Roni walked over to the window, and, on pulling the curtain a little way aside, exclaimed—

"By the powers! there is the vagabond himself on the other side of the street. There can be no doubt, Antonio, now, of who your enemy is. You were going to your uncle's Brandon?"

"Yes. He had intended going to Homer's Garden first, but thought it unsafe. Muldowney has some trinkets and papers which belonged to Mariana's mother. I will write a note to Mick, asking him and Mrs. Muldowney to meet us at my uncle's, and also to bring with them the articles in their possession."

The note was soon written and one of the hotel servants sent off with it. Under Roni's direction Brandon and Antonio then left the hotel by a side door that was little used, and they succeeded in getting off without being observed.

Meanwhile Roni could see Luigi still keeping sentry on the other side. After a little time a man passed by the chorus-singer, and although neither stopped, Roni thought he could perceive a motion as if some words had been interchanged. He was confirmed in this by seeing the same man (a swarthy looking fellow, evidently a foreigner) passing the window at which he watched. Roni, still keeping the curtain open but a little way, then saw the man go up to the cabman. After a few words had passed between the two the man made a sign to Luigi, who still kept to his post, apparently making himself as little conspicuous as might be.

Some time after the man had left the cabman, and after he thought a sufficient time had elapsed for his friends to get clear off, Roni went out and spoke to the driver, telling him that he would not be again required.

"That's a pity. I have just missed a fare."

"How's that?"

"Just before you came a foreigner came up and asked was I engaged. I said yes, I was waiting for

two gents as was inside."

"Then I must make it up to you. Here you are," said Roni, putting into the driver's hand a rather more liberal sum than he had expected.

When Signor Roni went back to his place at the coffee-room window he could see Luigi still keeping guard, although the cabman had driven off. There he remained until it was time for both to go to rehearsal at the Princess's, where soon after they met, but Roni, of course, treated the other as if nothing had happened.

Meanwhile, Brandon and Antonio, after making a detour, and being pretty well satisfied they had not been watched, found their way to the residence of the good old priest.

There they found Father MacMahon waiting to receive them, and with him Mr. and Mrs. Muldowney, Mary Brandon and Mariana having been out since early in the morning.

Hugh Brandon introduced Antonio, at the same time telling of the strange circumstances that had recently occurred. He then asked the Muldowneys to let Antonio see the articles they had belonging to Mariana's mother.

Before, however, this could be done, Father MacMahon, who had all the while been narrowly scanning Antonio's face, exclaimed—

"I am right. I now remember where I saw your face—

The priest went on, not noticing Antonio's piteous signs, appealing for his silence—

"Do you not remember me a professor at the Irish College in Rome? It is hard to believe I can find you in such a plight, but surely you are the Prince Gonzalvi!"

"For Heaven's sake, Father!" cried Antonio, "speak not that name. Let it be buried for ever."

"But surely you need not fear," said Hugh Brandon. "Here you are among good and faithful friends."

"Who can tell? Oh how often have I before thought that and been betrayed."

Seeing how painful was the subject it was pursued no further.

Antonio (or Gonzalvi, as he must now be called, for it was indeed that unhappy nobleman) now produced the likeness of his daughter and showed it to Mrs. Muldowney.

"'Tis Mariana's mother, sure enough," she exclaimed. "Heaven be her bed this night."

The Muldowneys then opened the parcel containing the relics of the lost Bianca, which Gonzalvi at once recognised, together with some papers written by his daughter, which threw light on her wanderings after her flight from Rome.

Gonzalvi wept over his daughter's sad story as he could gather it from the various scraps of paper in her handwriting. Soon after she fled from Rome she had given birth to her daughter, Mariana, in Marseilles. She had taken a considerable quantity of jewellery with her on her flight, so that, on the proceeds of this, she was able, with her child, to subsist for some years in tolerable comfort. All the while she searched for her father, the clue to whose whereabouts she had lost, while he, also a wanderer, while he fled from his pursuers sought everywhere for his daughter. What made their search most difficult was that they dared not reveal their true names, each fearing to meet everywhere an instrument of the Carbonari. They even found it unsafe to write to Rome to tell friends there of their whereabouts, for, evidently through the agents of the Secret Society in the Italian post-offices, these never reached their friends, but only brought their relentless pursuers again upon their track. This

went on until the time when Bianca was brought, as has already been described, to Homer's Garden, where eventually she who had been born and reared in a palace breathed her last among such humble though kindly surroundings.

Gonzalvi's own story for the last twenty years had been similar to that of his daughter, and now that he had at length heard of her it was only to learn that she was lost to him in this world.

After a while Mary Brandon and Mariana returned. Father MacMahon went out into the passage, and, taking the young maiden into an adjoining room, told her of the extraordinary incidents which had occurred, so that when Gonzalvi embraced his grand-child there was joy in both their hearts at this unexpected happiness. To the old man it seemed as if at length, after his weary pilgrimage, there was still something he could live for. He had lost a daughter, but he had found another, and never did his heart feel so uplifted since the fatal day when he had gone forth from his country with the mark of doom upon his forehead.

It was now plain both to Father MacMahon and his nephew what had caused the terrible reluctance of their old friend to speak of himself or to disclose anything concerning his past life. It was only too evident that he had good cause for his dread, he and his family having been pursued so relentlessly by the Carbonari.

Mariana's presence, however, seemed to have opened up her grandfather's heart, and he now was made to see that among such friend there was no longer any necessity for the precautions he had always previously been compelled to take. He explained how necessary were these safeguards, as more than once he had found that through incautiously giving slight confidences to those who had appeared but simple fellow-travellers he

had brought upon his track the instruments of the Carbonari. It was thus that for twenty long and weary years, in whatever land he sought shelter, the sentence of the Secret Tribunal was ever before him, and their words of doom had burned into his brain :—

“ If the victim succeed in escaping he shall be pursued incessantly in every place; and the guilty shall be struck by an invisible hand, were he sheltered in the bosom of his mother, or even in the tabernacle.

For twenty years, too, had Griffo, the child of the Revolution, who had slain Count Carafa in the Palace of the Quirinal, dogged Gonzalvi's footsteps, seeking his blood. To every land in Europe, to America, and even to far-off Australia, had he followed his intended victim, who had so far, almost as if by a series of miracles, escaped the dagger of the assassin. Several times he had entirely lost trace of Gonzalvi, and on one of these occasions he fought in the ranks of the Garibaldians in the campaign in which the two Brandons had served on the other side in the Papal Zouaves. While the war was in progress he must have somewhere encountered John Brandon, and no doubt this was how he came to recognise him as the ‘Zouave Lieutenant’ when the two met accidentally at the Princess's Theatre. It would appear that after this campaign Griffo had again got upon Gonzalvi's track, and again lost it, which brings us up to the time where we find the instrument of the Carbonari, first known to us as the youth Griffo—now almost a middle-aged man, a chorus-singer in the Opara Company under the name of Luigi—and Gonzalvi, reduced by poverty and misfortune to such a low ebb that even his arch enemy can scarcely recognise him in the person of the wretched Antonio.

It was now certain there was no longer any safety in Liverpool for Gonzalvi, for Griffo was sure to know

of his residence in Homer's Garden, and, indeed, to find him out wherever he went. Should Griffo ascertain the relationship between Gonzalvi and Mariana there might also be danger to her. As, fortunately, nobody in Homer's Garden knew of the whereabouts of the school she was at except the Muldowneys, it was thought safer she should go back as soon as possible.

As regards Gonzalvi himself, so far as the Government of Italy was concerned, he might go back at any moment and claim his property, but then, as he had been denounced in such a special manner as a traitor by the Carbonari, his life would not have been safe a single day.

It was now that good old Father MacMahon, ever kind and thoughtful, came to the rescue, and struck out a plan for the future. It happened, very fortunately, that he knew of a professorship just vacant in a college near London, and, from what he knew of Prince Gonzalvi's acquirements, he was quite sure that the heads of the college would be glad to obtain his services.

He was therefore about to write a letter there when Hugh suggested that, as it was urgent to get Antonio out of the way as soon as possible, he ought to telegraph. This was done, and in little more than an hour a reply was received that Father MacMahon's friend could come on at once, the post being still vacant, and the heads of the college willing to take him on the good priest's recommendation.

It was a touching farewell between grandfather and grandchild so suddenly united, to be almost as suddenly torn asunder until more propitious times should bring them together again.

In order to entirely destroy all trace of Gonzalvi (for Griffo and his friends would be sure to watch the

railway stations and other public points of departure) he was taken in a conveyance by road to a station some twelve miles outside of Liverpool, and from this point booked to London.

* * * * *

A few days afterwards, Hugh Brandon received a letter from Dublin from his friend Roni, saying that just as he expected, Luigi had not turned up with the company in the Irish capital. There was no doubt, therefore, but that Griffo and his worthy *confreres* were still hanging about Liverpool, looking out for their victim.

CHAPTER VII.—A GAME OF SPECULATION.



HOUGH it was a sore trial to Mariana to have her holidays cut short so suddenly, the wisdom of the course her friends had taken in sending her back to school was soon made manifest.

It was found through the agency of Giacomo, the organ-man, who was now anxious to make reparation for the injury he had done through having allowed himself to be made the dupe of Griffo, that the agent of the Carbonari was still hovering about Homer's Garden.

Griffo knew perfectly well, through his own watchfulness and the aid of his auxiliaries, that Gonzalvi must either be in close concealment somewhere in Liverpool or that he had left the town; otherwise he was sure to have encountered him at some one or other of the places he had been in the habit of frequenting. He had, as we have seen, lost sight of him after entering the Poly-National Hotel. He knew that Gonzalvi could not be hiding himself there, for

the man he had left to relieve him when he had to go to rehearsal found from the servants of the hotel, in the course of the day, that both Brandon and his venerable friend must have left by the side entrance even while Griffo was watching in the front.

He had also ascertained that one of the Hotel servants had taken a note from Brandon or Roni to Muldowney.

So constant had been the watch that Griffo was quite satisfied that Gonzalvi had never returned to Homer's Garden.

In like manner he knew that the aged nobleman had not gone back to Hugh Brandon's nor Beronti's.

The kindly image-dealer was sorry to hear from Hugh that his modeller was not likely to return to him, but, withal, rejoiced to know that the old man's life in the future was more likely to be happy and comfortable than it recently had been.

Griffo, therefore, argued that, unless Gonzalvi had actually left Liverpool on quitting the Poly-National Hotel, which he thought most unlikely, he could not have left the town by any of the ordinary means—so closely had he caused the railway stations and other points of departure to be watched: consequently, he concluded, the chances were all in favour of Gonzalvi being yet concealed somewhere in Liverpool.

In addition to these places from which the agents of the Carbonari might expect to be again able to take up the lost clue, Giacomo, in the course of about a week, ascertained, beyond doubt, that the house of Father MacMahon was also being watched with untiring perseverance by two men who were unknown to the organ-man, but who, he felt sure, were in the service of the chorus-singer.

It was therefore certain, Giacomo thought, that Griffo must still be getting information from some

person in the neighbourhood of Homer's Garden, and it was not long until he began to suspect that Howler, the "Converted Clown," was the informer.

Giacomo had some difficulty in arriving at this conclusion. He would naturally, Griffo would no doubt think, be the person through whom Gonzalvi had taken alarm.

Griffo would, consequently, for the future, give Giacomo as wide a berth as possible, and thus keep himself removed, as far as he could, outside of the sphere of the organ-man's observation.

Giacomo, however, did succeed in coming across Griffo—about a month after Gonzalvi's flight from Liverpool.

He had returned one evening from his usual beat, and, after having had something to eat at home, was lounging about the neighbourhood, until by chance he came near the crowd of people who were listening to Mr. Howler, at the "Holy Lamp."

The night was somewhat dark, but there was sufficient light from the lamp for Giacomo to catch a glimpse of a man on the outskirts of the crowd, whose figure he thought was familiar to him.

The man was in the garb of an ordinary dock-labourer, which at first deceived our friend; but the supposed workman, happening to turn his head, displayed a profile that could belong to no-one but Griffo.

In order to watch more closely without being observed himself, Giacomo made his way a couple of yards up an "entry" that commanded a view of the "Holy Lamp."

As soon as the crowd had dispersed, with the exception of a few loungers, Howler joined Griffo, and the two walked off together without any delay, as though the meeting had been previously arranged.

Giacomo followed cautiously until he saw the worthy pair turning into the street at the top of London-

road where Griffo apparently still lived. A few yards along this street, there was a man standing at the corner of a passage with a bundle under his arm.

Leaving Howler for a short time, Griffo went up the passage with the man, and presently reappeared with his costume somewhat changed. A long and rather stylish-looking overcoat completely covered all trace of the dock labourer's attire, while for the "bucco" cap he had previously worn he had now substituted a soft felt hat. It would, therefore, appear that the decent people with whom he boarded were not aware of the extraordinary transformations their lodger, Signor Luigi, was in the habit of making in his costume.

Giacomo just stayed to take note of the house which the two conspirators had entered, and then made his way as fast as he could to tell Hugh Brandon what he had seen. The close connection of these two seemed to show, he thought, that it must have been through the "Converted Clown" that the priest's house was being watched.

Meanwhile, Griffo had ushered Howler into his sitting-room, and asked him to be seated. The "Converted Clown," as he delighted to style himself in sensational posters, was a stout, low-sized man, the top of whose head was bald and shiny, with only a thin fringe of rather dark hair round the sides. He had a short pug nose, cunning eyes, a sensual mouth, and the whole face of such a complexion that he might have prosecuted it for libel if he practised the principles he professed.

"Will you drink," asked the Italian, producing a decanter of brandy and a couple of glasses.

Howler assumed a look of indignation as he exclaimed—

"Would you have me forswear the glorious cause,

the cause——”

“There, that will do, Howler. Don’t preach here. I remember—you profess to be what you call a teetotaler. We have none of that sect in Italy, but you English are a strange people. With us, when a man has been a drunkard or guilty of any other crime, he does not go proclaiming his conversion and the enormities he has committed at every lamp-post, as if glorying in his delinquencies. He is so much ashamed of his past life that he goes and in secret does penance for his sins, trying to amend.”

“That is your Italian superstition.”

“I suppose so. I am sorry your principles forbid you to drink with me,” said Griffo, imbibing with evident zest from the glass he had filled for himself.

Howler looked longingly at the tempting liquor his companion appeared to be enjoying so much, and at length said—

“Yes, signor, it is the devil’s draught. There is death in the bowl. It is poison. But—sometimes—even poison can be taken medicinally, and, do you know, signor, just at the moment I ——”

“Don’t feel well. You look bad certainly. You will take a glass of brandy, then?”

“As medicine, though,” said Howler, holding out his glass to be filled.

“Certainly,” said Griffo, pouring out a glass of brandy for the “Great Temperance Orator.”

“Thank you,” said Howler, with a knowing kind of leer, as he tossed off the brandy without winking.

“Have another dose,” said Griffo, replenishing the “Converted Clown’s” glass.

“As medicine, you know.”

“Howler, you are a hypocrite!”

“Signor!—sir!” said the other, trying to get up a look of virtuous indignation.

"There now, you know you are. You cannot fool me. Let us get to business. You call upon the poor people in Homer's Garden occasionally."

"Oh, yes, to warn backsliders, and bring them back to the fold."

"You cannot hear what has become of this old Antonio?"

"Nothing more than this. He was seen to go into the house of the priest, and to leave it on the same day in a gig with Brandon, who is, they tell me, a scene-painter in that temple of Satan, called the Princess's Theatre."

"Howler you are a humbug. Besides you are offensive. Don't you know I was lately a member of the theatrical profession myself?"

"Yes, signor; but you are now a brand plucked from the burning—like myself."

"That will do, Howler. Keep that for the 'Holy Lamp.' But in future do your rehearsals in private. Look here, now! You are a 'Converted Clown,' you say?" Converted to what? A good clown may be a gentleman, but what are you?"

"Oh, signor."

"Now, I have been listening to you and watching you for some time, and I don't believe you ever were anything so respectable as a clown."

"Sir!"

"I'll say more. I don't believe you were ever on the stage in your life. You are a rascal."

"That I should hearken to this son of Belial!"

"There, you will make me sick. I must have some medicine, now," said Griffo, taking a glass of brandy. He then continued—"Now, then, Mr. Howler, you may, for all I care, be a 'Converted Clown,' or anything else that pays best or enables you to dig deepest into the pockets of your dupes. Now, I am always

‘willing to pay well for a good article. The article I now want is a *rascal*. There, there now, you need not pretend to fume. As a matter of business, I want I say, a rascal—a good one. You are the man. I never met a better, and I am willing to pay you according to your merits. But we are again wasting time. What is this story you tell me of the Italian lady who died some years since in the house of the Irishman, Muldowney?’

“Yes, she left a child—a daughter.”

“Where is the girl now?”

“At school, somewhere.”

“Do none of the people in Homer’s Garden know where?”

“No; all they know is that it is some place chosen by the priest.”

“A convent school, I should say?”

“I don’t know.”

“We must try to find this place out. Let me see. They often advertise these boarding schools. I must try some of the newspapers or directories. You say that within the last week or two, it has been whispered about in Homer’s Garden that this girl is old Antonio’s granddaughter.”

“Yes, so it is said. When Antonio was leaving the priest’s house, with Brandon, the girl clung to the old man and cried bitterly, and he kissed her tenderly. After that the people who heard of this began to think they could see a family resemblance between them.”

“This may help us more than I had calculated on. We shall, no doubt, be able to find her easier than her grandfather, if such he be. Very well, Howler, that will do for to-night. Keep your eyes and ears open and if you hear any more let me know.”

“Very good.”

“Just have another dose of medicine before you

go. Three spoonsful before going to bed you know."

Howler took his medicine cheerfully, and smacked his lips as if he liked it.

He then took leave of his employer, promising to carry out his instructions most implicitly.

* * * * *

Hugh Brandon gave every moment he could spare from his duties at the theatre to his great picture, which he hoped to have ready for the local exhibition.

For several months after his brother's departure for South Africa he had frequent letters from Jack, and, of course, from time to time he saw in the newspapers vivid descriptions of the war, which were known by the public to be from the powerful and racy pen of Mr. John Brandon, the special correspondent of the *New York Star*. Few of those who read with pleasure those stirring sketches would imagine they had been written by a man lately stricken by a crushing grief, but many who knew him knew, also, that John Brandon had within him a proud and resolute spirit that would bear him through the heaviest misfortune.

Hugh Brandon, during this time, frequently saw Rose Aylmer, sometimes at her father's house, and occasionally at his uncle's, when she came to visit her old schoolfellow, Mary Brandon. Hugh all the while, with the same sensitive nature as his brother, had never told his love, but bided his time, when he hoped he would have acquired both riches and reputation enough to enable him to go to Mr. Aylmer and ask him for his daughter. From Rose's ever kind and gentle manner towards him his heart was filled with hope that he would be able to win her love.

Although, as he thought, he had carefully avoided showing any trace of his feeling towards Rose, her father was not so short-sighted as not to see what the

young man thought was only known to himself and his brother, and perhaps guessed at by his sister.

Now Mr. Aylmer had no idea of bestowing his daughter upon what he would consider a poor man. His reception, therefore, of Hugh Brandon, whenever he met him, although always marked by the most studious politeness, was never of a very cordial kind—and very different from that given to Stephen Talbot, who was a constant and a welcome guest. Indeed but for the kindness shown to him by Mrs. Aylmer, it is just possible Hugh Brandon, under the chilling receptions of the old gentleman, might have discontinued his visits altogether. The mother would gladly, had she only herself to consult, have given her daughter to the artist, but then she deferred, as she did in most things, to the supposed superior judgment of her spouse.

Aylmer, intensely fond of his daughter as he was, considered he was best studying her happiness by obtaining for her a wealthy husband. This was why he encouraged Stephen Talbot, whom he admired as a shrewd man of business, who had done well, besides being, as everybody admitted, a capital young fellow in other respects.

One evening, Talbot having dined with the Aylmers, the two gentlemen were sitting over their wine, talking of their commercial undertakings. Aylmer had, during his career, done a large and flourishing business, but latterly he had been speculating on a colossal scale. The only one in his confidence in the matter, besides Bland, his junior partner, now in America, was Stephen Talbot. He, during the last few days, had shown some misgiving as to the wisdom of Aylmer holding on any longer to the large stock of cotton he had in hand, when the markets had already risen to such a figure as would have given him a mag-

nificent profit.

This was the subject of their conversation, and it was strange that on the present occasion the young man in his counsel showed the prudence of age, while his friend displayed the more daring and speculative spirit which is generally associated with youth.

"Then you are still determined to hold on?" said Talbot.

"Why not? Prices are bound to go up."

"Take my advice, Aylmer, don't risk it. With prices what they are you can afford to wash your hands of cotton for life."

"So I could, Talbot, but I have a great ambition—a glorious ambition, my boy. I mean to outshine them all. The Rothchilds themselves or the big Bonanza miners will be nothing to what I intend to be. Their gold and silver shall pale before my cotton."

Talbot shook his head doubtfully, while the old man continued—

"And it will be yours one day, Stephen, my boy, for, of course, you are to marry Rose."

"Surely you intend giving her some voice in the matter herself," said Talbot, smiling at Aylmer's impetuosity.

"Oh, she won't refuse you. Besides she confessed to me, that night you may remember we were at the opera together, that you were a great favourite of hers."

"I hope so, but then you know there may be other favourites."

"You mean Hugh Brandon. I know he is hanging about after her, but I shall soon stop that—which reminds me that Rose is on a visit to Miss Brandon this very evening, where, no doubt, she will meet this scene-painter. I must really stop that sort of thing."

"No, no, Aylmer," exclaimed Talbot. "Honour bright. Hugh Brandon is my friend, and if Rose

prefers him I can only wish them joy. If I am to be the happy man I am sure he would do no less by me."

"Nonsense, man. These girls don't know their own minds, and, besides, she does not care for this young fellow any more than as being the brother of her friend. But about this big speculation of mine, just look at that letter from Bland."

Talbot perused the letter attentively. Aylmer was somewhat surprized that his young friend did not catch his own enthusiasm, for he simply handed back the letter with the observation—

"Bland is still in the States, then?"

"Yes, but I expect him home by the next mail."

"I see he has travelled through all the cotton-growing States."

"Yes, and gone to every spot in America where there is any cotton being held, so that he knows to a bale, almost, what there is in the country. We have made our calculations on these facts, and as to the stocks held elsewhere, too closely to be mistaken. Prices are bound to go up still more, I tell you."

"Well, yes, if Bland's statements are reliable you are pretty safe, but his information may not be correct, and besides—can you trust him? I don't care much for Bland myself, I must confess."

"You have a prejudice against Bland, because you thought he was casting eyes at Rose."

"No, no, there are other reasons which cause me not to take to him as I could wish to your partner—reasons which, I confess, I cannot explain to myself, reasons which are, in short, I suppose, to make a *bull*, unreasonable."

"Depend upon it, Bland is perfectly reliable."

"Well, perhaps so; but, apart from this, I wish you would take my advice and realise. There are so many things, as you well know, in business which arise un-

expectedly to upset our nicest calculations. But I will talk about the matter tomorrow. and as it is getting somewhat late I will be bidding you good night."

Old Aylmer shook his intended son-in-law warmly by the hand as he took his leave.

Talbot had only been gone a few minutes, when Mr. Aylmer heard his daughter Rose being admitted, and, from the second voice he could hear, he judged she had been escorted home by Hugh Brandon.

He determined to speak to Brandon at once.

He found the two young people talking together, evidently in good spirits after their walk.

"Rose, my dear," he said, "will you step in to your mother. I think I heard her asking for you just now. How do you do, Mr. Brandon?" he added, extending his hand in the studiously polite and frigid way in which he usually received the artist. "Will you do me the kindness to step in here for a few moments? I wish to have a word with you."

Having bidden good night to Rose, whose sweet smile at parting more than ever enchained his heart, he accompanied her father into the drawing room, not, it must be confessed, without some misgivings as to Mr. Aylmer's reason for asking him to an interview.

Aylmer motioned him to a chair, at the same time taking a seat at the other side of the table, and facing him.

"I have sought this interview," said the old merchant, with some slight pomposity of manner, "in connection with a subject that concerns the happiness of my family, and one member of it in particular."

Brandon scarcely knew what to reply to this, so merely bowed.

"I have noticed lately," Mr. Aylmer resumed "with some uneasiness (you will, perhaps, excuse me for say-

ing) your marked attentions to my daughter."

"Indeed, sir, I was not aware I had paid Rose any such marked attentions."

"I am glad to hear you say so. I must have been mistaken then. I must conclude, therefore, that you have no feelings towards her but those of a friend."

"Do not mistake me, Mr. Aylmer. I only meant to say I did not *think* I had shown your daughter any attentions of the kind you speak of. Some day I hope to be in a position to do so, for I do indeed love her."

"It is enough, then, for me to tell you that I have noticed how you evidently regarded Rose, no doubt, as you say, unconsciously, and I must now ask you to shape your conduct to her differently in the future. Now I have spoken to you, I trust to the high sense of honour which I know you possess that you will defer to my wishes. You must, I am sure, see, on consideration, from your relative positions, that it is impossible for you to think of my daughter as your wife."

"I know, Mr. Aylmer, that you, as a prudent father, would require in Rose's husband that he should have at least sufficient wealth to ensure for her peace and happiness."

"Exactly, and don't you see that you, who are merely an artist, could not hope to maintain your wife in the position a *lady* ought to move in; such a position as could be assured for her by some of my business friends—young gentlemen, for instance, like Stephen Talbot."

"Pardon me, Mr. Aylmer, if I ever have the happiness to win your daughter, you yourself cannot but admit that she will not thereby cease to be a lady, inasmuch as I presume to think, whatever my shortcomings might be in a worldly sense, she would at least be the wife of a gentleman. She would not

necessarily be this as the wife of a cotton-broker, although I am bound to confess that Stephen Talbot is every inch a gentleman, not on account of his connection with the cotton trade, but for other and better reasons."

"Ah, yes, that is no doubt how the enthusiasm of youth looks at these matters."


"I can never," resumed Hugh, "perhaps, hope to be a millionaire, but at least I look forward with confidence to being able to earn a modest independence—sufficient, with true love, to make my wife a happy woman."

"Now, I tell you again, Mr. Brandon, this is sheer nonsense. It would be all very well in a romance, but there is really no such thing as romance now-a-days. A man who really cares for his daughter must look for a substantial settlement from her future husband. I will now say no more, and as you know my views, I will trust, as I have said before, to your sense of honour not to interfere with them. I must, therefore, ask you to think no more of my daughter. You have acted well so far in at least trying to restrain your feelings from such really honourable motives. Continue to do so and you will find me your friend. There, now," said the old gentleman, rising, "good night, Mr. Brandon, good night."

"Good night," said Hugh Brandon, with a proud, steady, hopeful look in his eye as they parted, "I shall win your daughter yet, and with your consent too."



CHAPTER VIII.—“THE HOMER’S GARDEN MYSTERY.”

ALTHOUGH Griffo's two subordinates, for such they were, watched the house of Father MacMahon incessantly, they could not find that Gonzalvi had ever returned to it, since the day on which, according to Howler's information, he had left it accompanied by Hugh Brandon.

Howler himself continued to keep a sharp look-out in the neighbourhood of Homer's Garden, behind which, and running parallel to it, was another street of somewhat similar character.

The houses were here, too, much let off in separate tenements, and almost every ground floor window had in it a card with the word “Apartments” printed upon it.

One evening, shortly after his interview with Griffo, the “Converted Clown” walked up this street, carefully counting the numbers as he went along, until he stopped at a house in the window of which was the usual announcement.

The front door was, like most of the houses in the locality, standing open. Howler walked up the steps and tapped at the door with his knuckles. He was answered by the woman of the house. He asked to see the apartments she had to be let. Among others he was shown a room at the back on the first floor upstairs. He looked out of the window from which he could, over the intervening yards, see the backs of the houses in Homer's Garden.

It was apparently quite a cursory glance he gave, but it was sufficient for his purpose, and after a few enquiries usual on both sides in such cases, he took

the room as a weekly tenant. On the following morning he sent in some few articles of furniture, including an iron camp bedstead and some bedding. He at once settled himself down in the place. He generally prepared his own meals, occasionally going out to an eating house, but most of his time while in the room, even while eating his food, was spent in watching out of his window the yard and back of the house opposite, which was that occupied by Mr. Muldowney and his various tenants.

He kept closely to his watch, late and early, and even so arranged that his place at the "Holy Lamp," on the evenings of the week when he usually went there, was filled by a friend of his, a "Converted Collier," or "Reformed Pugilist," or something of that kind.

Now, as Howler sat at the window, judiciously arranging his curtain so as not to be seen himself, he had a view of the yard of his own house, and, further on, of the common passage, beyond which was the yard of Muldowney's house, into which he could also see.

A good many lodgers passed in and out of the back doors in view, but he never could make out any trace of Antonio. It was only by that name he yet knew him, although he began to suspect that the old Italian must really be a person of some importance, seeing that so many people seemed so powerfully interested in him.

Howler's idea was that some property in Italy must have lately come to Antonio, and that Griffo, having some rival claim to it, was anxious to keep him out of it. He also had another theory, which was that Antonio's poverty was only a disguise, and that he had some concealed wealth about him, which would, he thought, account for Griffo being so anxious

to get possession of his person. This might also, he imagined, explain the extraordinary interest taken in the old man by the Muldowneys and Brandons, and by the priest; for he had no idea of anybody being influenced otherwise than by selfish motives.

Howler found this constant watching wearisome, and to relieve the monotony of his position had for a constant companion a frequently replenished brandy bottle, from which he partook from time to time (medicinally of course), so that during his long watches, although a person could hardly pronounce him to be drunk, he certainly was never altogether sober.

He had been over a week watching, when one night at about ten o'clock, he saw, by the faint light shining through the white blind on the back window of Muldowney's house, Mick himself coming out of the back door, carrying one end of a bulky looking object several feet long, while the other end was borne by Mrs. Muldowney. This they carried into a shed at the bottom end of the yard next the common passage.

In a short time, Howler's attention being now powerfully excited, he saw Mrs. Muldowney making her way back again to the house, and returning again almost immediately, carrying, along with a lighted candle, what appeared to the watcher in the opposite house to be a saw, a hatchet, and a large carving-knife.

She entered the shed, closing the door behind her.

These movements appeared to Howler's imagination, powerfully excited as it was by several tolerably strong doses of his medicine, as being in the highest degree suspicious and mysterious.

He therefore cautiously left the room, went down stairs, and out into the yard, the door of which he noiselessly unbolted, and let himself out into the common passage between his own and his neighbour's yard.

He stopped at the Muldowney's door and listened. As he expected, he could hear the two voices in conversation in the shed.

The first fragment of the dialogue he heard was in Mick's voice. Howler could just catch the words—

"—ould and useless, and time to be put out of the way."

There was a pause in the conversation, during which Howler thought he could hear what appeared to be a violent wrenching of something asunder. Again he heard Muldowney's voice—

"Well, now, to think that ould Antonio should turn a prince—no less!"

"Bedad, aye; sure 'twas as good as a play," replied his wife."

"Anyway, we've thricked this Griffu cutely, and put the ould man out of the way so nately that he'll niver set eyes upon him again till the days of kingdom come."

Again there seemed to the listener, upon whose mind a most horrible suspicion was beginning to dawn, to be a repetition of the wrenching sound he had heard before. At length he heard the woman's voice—

"What'll you do with the legs, Mick?"

"Burn thim, of coorse. Hand me the saw, Kitty, and I'll whip thim off in a jiffy."

Howler's horror was frightfully intensified. He was now certain that the Muldowney's had murdered Antonio for his money, and were at this moment making away with his body. He was gradually getting sobered by what he conceived to be the dreadful situation. After a further pause he again heard them speaking—

"Reach me the knife, now, Kitty, till I rip up the back. Bedad 'twas a tougher job than I expected.

Where'll I put the rest away? Oh, aye, in that ould packin' box. That'll do right well."

Howler thought he had heard enough. Moving stealthily along, and with trembling limbs, he made his way back to his room, wiping away as he went the cold sweat of terror from his face.

He sat down, poured himself out a glass of brandy, and reflected upon the situation.

He had, he felt sure, solved the mystery of Antonio's disappearance. From what he had heard of the old man having been a prince, he concluded he must, consequently, have been wealthy. To gain his wealth the Muldowneys had, he was sure, entrapped and murdered him. From the cheerful tone of Mick and his wife he concluded that they had been successful in obtaining considerable plunder from their victim.

Now, he asked himself, was it better to tell Griffo what had happened, or go boldly to Muldowney and claim a share of the spoil under threat of denouncing him to the law.

After some cogitation, he thought the last would be the more profitable course. He determined to go round to Homer's Garden at once. When he arrived there, the hour now being late, the outer door was closed. He had to knock several times before he was answered. At length Mick himself appeared with a lighted candle in his hand.

He was without his coat, with his shirt sleeves turned up, and Howler noticed on the left sleeve *a stain of blood!*

He had now no doubt on his mind as to what had been done, and he sternly asked—

"Where is Antonio?"

Mick, knowing the necessity for keeping Gonzalvi's whereabouts a secret, was somewhat staggered at the question, and Howler at once set down his startled

look as a certain proof of his guilt.

But in a moment more Mick replied—

"What business is it of yours where he is gone? You'll niver see him again, anyhow. Put that in your pipe and smoke it, me bould 'convart.'"

"You need not think to carry it off in that way. I know all about it, but I am willing to be reasonable and share with you. I know you have killed him."

"What!" roared Mick, with mingled rage and astonishment.

Howler saw the dangerous look in Muldowney's eye, and attempted to sidle down the steps, but was not quick enough to escape a well-directed kick which sent him sprawling into the street.

The "converted clown," as he rose with sore bones, from the pavement, had now only one idea, which was to be revenged upon Muldowney.

Accordingly, he made his way to the detective department of the police office, in Dale-street, and there gave such information that in less than half-an-hour he re-appeared in Homer's Garden with four policemen. Mick was made prisoner, greatly to his own astonishment, and that of his lodgers, and amidst the pitiful lamentations of his wife. He was at once taken to the main bridewell, booked, and locked up for the night, in order to be brought before the magistrate in the morning.

Meanwhile, guided by Howler, two of the policemen proceeded to search the shed in the yard, the door of which they found fastened only with an iron button.

The policemen surveyed the place by the light of a candle, but could perceive no trace of the scene of blood which they expected would meet their view after the vivid description they had heard from Howler.

Strewn about the floor were fragments of what appeared to have been an old couch or sofa. They looked

as if they had been pulled to pieces or sawn with the view of being chopped into firewood.

Howler declared he was sure he had heard sounds, and also conversation, from which he was certain they must have been cutting up a "body" in the shed they were now standing in within the last hour.

Again carefully looking round the place, he saw, what had first escaped their notice, a good-sized packing case, behind the door, and this he now positively declared must contain "the body."

As it was corded up, the policemen decided to convey it to the station, so as to have its contents examined there, and, accordingly, the case was taken away for that purpose.

Next morning on the placard of one of the Liverpool dailies appeared in large letters, "Horrible murder and mutilation of an Italian in Homer's Garden." Of course the whole run was on this journal, which contained a full and circumstantial account of the mysterious proceedings as imagined by the "temperance orator." It would appear that, somehow, this paper only had got the "tip" either from Howler himself or from somebody connected with the police force. It was a great triumph over its contemporaries to have such a splendid piece of exclusive news. The fact that it was *as yet* the only paper in the kingdom which contained such an important item of intelligence was a clear proof of the extraordinary enterprise of the journal in question.

Of course this was also a rare chance for the London *Police Record* and *Newgate News*, which, that week, copying from the Liverpool daily, had for its chief attraction "The Homer's Garden Mystery," with startling pictures taking up the whole of the front page. In the centre was a vigorously drawn representation of the supposed Muldowney, showing poor

Mick as a diabolical-looking scoundrel, dressed in the costume of the typical music hall and *Police Record* Irishman—knee-breeches, frieze coat, caubeen, &c., all complete. He is dealing an old man a deadly blow with a formidable-looking club, while a woman, a frightful hag (supposed to be the murderer's wife) looks on approvingly. The subjects of the smaller pictures were the finding of the "body," and the most minute details of the cutting up process, as described by the aid of ~~the~~ powerful imagination of the "converted clown," a fancy portrait of that worthy himself being also given; while in the letter-press account of the affair he was described as "that eminent temperance orator, the Rev. Mr. Howler."

As early in the morning as the police regulations allowed, and with many a tear, the poor, afflicted Kitty Muldowney took her way to the main bridewell in Cheapside, with a basket containing the food allowed to be sent in at stated times by the friends of the prisoners.

It was with a keen sense of humiliation that she took her place amongst the group assembled in the prison yard round the door, in which was constructed a wicket for the purpose of taking in food, and through which to answer inquiries.

The group gathered round on this particular morning seemed to be of the lowest and most degraded caste, and their coarse and filthy language made poor Mrs. Muldowney shudder.

"Is Joe in the New Model yet?" asked a bloated looking fellow of a youth of the "green linnet" species, something like one of the fellows who assaulted Gonzalvi, while known as Antonio, the image man.

"No," replied the other, "he got out on Saturday, but the bobbies collared him again, all along of a pocket book he found, and he's here now till they

bring him afore the beak."

"Its a hokkard street where Joe lives," struck in a little girl not more than eleven years old. "The peelers is so sharp that if you honly shows your precious smeller outside the door they nips you up before you knows where you are. Someone belonging to you got boned, mum?" added she, turning to Mrs. Muldowney, as she saw the tears streaming down the decent old soul's cheeks.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Muldowney, scarcely knowing what to say.

"Well, mum, don't take on so about it. Lor' bless you, its nout when you're used to it." Poor Kitty hoped most fervently she never would be used to it. "They don't let you send much in if they knows it, but Lor, you can do 'um for all that. I recollect when our Jack was nabbed, the time afore last, and he wanted some 'bacca awful bad, so I just nips the hinside out of a cob, and plants the 'bacca in, and then claps the piece on again and they never twigged it. Its no use putting anything in the coffee, for they tries that with a spoon, but you'll soon be up to all their fakes, mum, if you only mind."

All this was perfect martyrdom to Mrs. Muldowney, for though the condolences she received were perhaps well meant, they only added to the poignancy of her grief.

The food was taken into Mick in due time, after which Mrs. Muldowney went to look up a legal man to defend her husband.

Events, however, had occurred which made the solicitor's attention in the court almost unnecessary. Indeed, had it not been for the fact that Mick had been regularly booked for the offence, he need never have been brought before the magistrate at all, for when the packing-case supposed to contain the "body" of old

Antonio was opened, it was found to contain nothing more dreadful than some scraps of leather cloth and girth web and some flocks and hair out of the old sofa, whose "body" had been dismembered on the previous night by the Muldowneys.

Honest Mick was in due course brought up, and Howler put into the witness-box. Mick's solicitor was able to explain the reason (as far as it could prudently be made known) of Antonio's absence, and as for the bloodstain on Muldowney's shirt, that was shown to be from his cutting his hand while ripping up the back of the sofa.

The worthy stipendiary, with the conscientious care he was in the habit of bestowing upon every case, soon saw the absurdity of the whole situation, and of course dismissed the case with some words of kindly sympathy for the Muldowneys, and a request to the police to keep a sharp look out in future upon the movements of Mr. Howler.

The unmerciful chaffing of such of his brother pressmen as were in court was, it need scarcely be said, by no means appreciated by the representative of the enterprising daily which had astonished Liverpool and the surrounding districts with its exclusive account of the "Homer's Garden mystery."



CHAPTER IX.—A FALL.—MISFORTUNES.



HE next morning after the conversation previously detailed between Aylmer and Talbot, they met at their accustomed hour on the Exchange flags.

"I suppose you know that cotton has taken a turn," said Talbot.

"Lower—oh, yes, but that's nothing. There are always these little temporary fluctuations."

"That may be, but all the same, I would sell out if I were you. Do not tempt fortune any longer, and you will have made a splendid stroke, even as it is."

"No ; I tell you I cannot be mistaken, and remember it is partly on your account. I shall be able to give Rose a dowry a king might envy."

"Then for my sake and your family's I would ask you to realise—do so this morning. From a few whispers I have heard, I think it is beginning to become known about the immense stocks you are holding. They are saying what a good thing you will make of it. They are, of course, supposing you will realise now, when the prices have, according to the general opinion, reached their utmost possible level. Of course, as you say, the slight fall this morning counts for little, so that I may say that even to-day's prices are something unexampled."

"All the more reason I should hold on. Who would have thought cotton would have gone up as it has done and yet, as you are aware, it was only what I was certain of, and therefore it only shows how correct have been my calculations. No, Stephen Talbot, I cannot be mistaken. I will choose my own time, which is not yet awhile."

"Well, I hope you will not be sorry. I must bid you good morning, as I have an appointment just now at my office."

The two men parted—the younger with an uneasy feeling, the elder one quite sanguine as to the success of his speculations.

Next day prices were lower again, and the day following a little lower still, but as yet no serious fall had taken place.

Talbot all the while urged upon Aylmer the wisdom of selling out the stock while it could yet be done at an enormous profit.

But no—the gradual fall in prices seemed to make the old man only more resolved to hold on, feeling sure that this was but a temporary fluctuation, and that he was right in his expectations.

But, contrary to his calculations, prices did not rise. Talbot told him he had heard of others who had been holding large quantities of stock who were beginning to bring it into the market, fearing a still further downward tendency.

Aylmer only scoffed at the cowardice of such people, but *he* knew better he said.

But, for all his calculations, the market did continue to fall and it became evident to Stephen Talbot that an immense quantity of cotton was coming or was announced to arrive from unexpected quarters, and to him it seemed the more alarming that the fall was now becoming somewhat rapid ; so much so that the time came when, if he sold Aylmer would only realise his own money.

At this point, Talbot besought him for the sake of his family to pause while there was yet time.

But he only became more obstinate, day by day, and declared there was now all the more reason why he should hold on.

He was evidently possessed by an infatuation that nothing could overcome, for even the entreaties of his wife and daughter, who had begun to hear of how matters stood, were of no avail.

It is not necessary to dwell further on Aylmer's folly. Prices were now falling at an alarming rate, and Talbot could at length see that his old friend's utter ruin was but a question of time.

His good name and credit, of course, sustained him for a considerable time, but this could not be expected to last, and when at length his partner, Bland, at whose instigation he had embarked on his enormous speculations, began to hamper him at every turn, the time came when there was a complete smash-up of the good old firm that had weathered the storm of many a financial crisis for over half a century.

It was of course a sad blow to Mrs. Aylmer and Rose, but they were not without friends who came forward with timely aid, so that although they had to give up the style of life in which they had been living, there was no fear of their falling into absolute poverty.

Stephen Talbot, with delicate tact assisted his old friend in every way in which he could do so without wounding the extra-sensitiveness which had been developed by misfortune.

Hugh Brandon, when he heard of the misfortune that had befallen the Aylmers, deeply sympathised with them, and felt it the more keenly, as may be imagined, on account of his love for Rose. After the interview in which he had been told by Aylmer that he must cease to think of his daughter, he had not visited the family, feeling that he could not, with any self respect, continue to do so after the very plain way in which he had been spoken to by the old gentleman.

Aware, for he had been told, of what a formidable rival he had in Stephen Talbot, it was with great un-

easiness he heard that the young cotton-broker was a more constant visitor with the Aylmers than ever. Knowing how anxious Mr. Aylmer had been to have Talbot for a son-in-law, Hugh took council with his sister Mary, always his good angel through life, and by her advice, although he was somewhat surprised to find her not so hopeful of his success as he was himself, he at once determined to speak out to Rose Aylmer on the very first opportunity.

So anxious had he now become that he was not long in finding an occasion to tell her of his love.

She appeared greatly moved by the young man's confession, and seemed, all the while showing the sweetness of manner natural to her, as if she did not wish to listen to Hugh Brandon's earnest suit.

She told him she was deeply grieved to hear of his feelings towards her, the more so as she had always regarded him as amongst her dearest friends, and therefore it was the more painful for her to refuse him, as she must, seeing that she could not hold out any hope of ever being able to return his love—indeed, she said, with a sad smile, she had already made up her mind never to get married at all.

This was a stunning blow to Hugh. It required all the consolation he could get from his sister to enable him to bear up under it.

His good old uncle, too, though he had not been told of the actual state of things, with his usual shrewdness, soon divined it, and he, too, poured balm upon Hugh's wounded spirit. But, after all, Hugh's was no zoward nature, and, thus helped by those to whom he was dear, he battled bravely against the feelings struggling within him.

More than ever he now threw himself into his profession, and he had no greater distraction from his affliction than his picture of the young Italian girl,

which, day by day, under his hands, was rapidly growing into the life-like creation which his brother, John, had predicted was to bring him fame and fortune.

Some time after a rumour came to Hugh Brandon's ears that Stephen Talbot and Rose Aylmer were shortly to be married. When he spoke of this to his sister, his generous nature would not allow him to make any complaint of the suspicion of a mercenary motive on the part of the girl he loved.

Mary Brandon, however, who always said she could read Hugh like a book, could not help detecting the slightest shade of bitterness in his tone, and she stoutly stood up for her friend, maintaining that if it was true that Rose Aylmer and Stephen Talbot were to be married it must be because he had really won her affections.

The old saying that misfortunes never come singly was now soon to be verified in the case of Hugh Brandon, but the new misfortune was fully shared by his sister and uncle. John Brandon had not been heard from lately, except through the medium of his correspondence in the newspapers. This was, therefore, as can readily be imagined, always eagerly scanned by his relatives for every scrap of intelligence from his pen, so that one morning they were overpowered by the dreadful news which had been telegraphed of the untimely death of John Brandon. With his usual adventurous spirit, and always anxious to do his duty to the fullest extent to his employers, he had, it seemed, accompanied a small mounted party which had been sent to make a reconnaissance.

They had gone some miles from the main body of the troops, and, after unsaddling their horses, were resting and refreshing themselves.

They had not dismounted more than a few minutes when there was an alarm. A strong party of natives

came down upon them with such suddenness and impetuosity that there was no time to make any defence.

Two or three of the party were killed at the first onset. There was a general panic and rush to the horses. John Brandon attempted to mount with the rest, but unfortunately his stirrup strap broke. He still retained his hold of the bridle, but his horse taking fright, only dragged him nearer to his assailants, and as the flying men who had deserted him looked back for a moment they could see him fall, having received about a dozen assegai wounds in trying to defend himself. In a few hours, the telegram stated, a strong party returned, and buried the bodies of those who had fallen.

CHAPTER X.—A MESSAGE FROM THE GRAVE.



ON the evening of the day when the tidings of John Brandon's untimely death appeared in the newspapers, Stephen Talbot, as was frequently his custom, called in upon his friends, the Aylmers, at the neat cottage they now inhabited in the suburbs.

Mr. Aylmer, himself, had been from home all day, and not yet returned, but Rose and her mother gladly welcomed their friend, as such indeed he had proved to them by many acts of thoughtful and unostentatious kindness, which had made their lives flow more smoothly than they could ever have believed possible after their late misfortune.

It seemed quite like a happy family group. For some little time they sat and chatted, and Rose then played a piece of music which was a favourite of Talbot's on her cottage piano, which instrument had been a birthday present from her father, and might now again be considered a present to her from the young

cotton broker ; for in the sale of effects consequent on their removal from the house they had formerly inhabited he had bought it in after a keen competition with a broker, who also seemed to have set his mind upon its possession.

After a while Talbot said—"This is sad news about poor John Brandon."

"What is that ? We have heard nothing," said Mrs. Aylmer, with much concern.

Rose was seated at her instrument, and with her back turned towards them, but she turned round her head quickly, and Talbot noticed a look of alarm on her face, but all she said was to repeat after him—

"About John Brandon ?"

"Yes ; have you not read to-day's papers," he asked of Mrs. Aylmer.

"We have had a newspaper to-day, but, somehow, I don't think any of us have looked into it."

"Then you will be sorry to hear that he has been killed."

Mrs. Aylmer uttered an exclamation of surprise and sympathy, but from Rose came a low moaning sound full of anguish. She swayed on her seat from side to side, and would have fallen to the ground had not Talbot quickly caught her.

"Heavens ! she has fainted," he exclaimed, as he gently carried her across the room, and laid her upon a sofa, while her mother knelt by her side in great alarm.

In a little time she regained consciousness, and, assisted by her mother, was able to sit up.

"What is the matter, my child ?" asked Mrs. Aylmer.

"You know I have not been so strong lately, and hearing so suddenly of poor John Brandon's death came as a great shock to me. But is the news certain ?

Is there no hope his name may have been mistaken for some other?"

Talbot then proceeded to tell the circumstances attending Brandon's death, so far as they had been made known in the telegram published in that morning's newspapers.

"Oh, it was cruel!" exclaimed Rose, the tears streaming down her cheeks, "cruel and cowardly for his comrades to fly and leave him to die such a death."

"By Heavens! you are right, Rose. The men who rode away and left their comrade to perish are unworthy of the name of soldiers."

Rose, exhausted by her outburst against Brandon's comrades, seemed to be getting weak again, and as if she were about to be overcome by faintness as before, observing which, her mother said—

"Rose, dear, I think it would do you good to lie down a little."

"Yes, I think I will go to my room if Mr. Talbot will excuse me."

She rose, and leaning upon her mother's arm, extended her hand, with a gentle yet sad smile, to the young man as she left the room.

When the door had closed, Talbot walked up and down with a troubled look on his face.

Presently Mrs Aylmer returned.

"I am afraid," said Talbot, "I have been only persecuting Rose with my attentions."

"Oh, no, Mr. Talbot. How can you say that,—you, our dearest friend?"

"Why, surely, you cannot but see—"

"See—what, Mr. Talbot?"

"That while I have been all the time trying to win your daughter's heart, it has been far away in South Africa."

"She has not been in her usual health since her fa-

ther's misfortune in business."

"Yes, I know she is sensitive, and I have no doubt that has preyed on her mind."

"So that of course, suddenly hearing of the dreadful death of John Brandon caused her fainting."

"I fear there is more in it than you think, Mrs. Aylmer: you know how I love your daughter, and that it has been my dearest wish to make her my wife."

"Yes, and I am certain you would make her happy."

"You are right, but I fear I shall never have the opportunity. When I found that I could make no progress in my efforts to win her, I thought it must be because Hugh Brandon had already secured her affections."

"And so I thought, and I must confess that, the young fellow being a favourite of mine, I am afraid I gave him at first some little encouragement."

"But that is not so, for I heard from Brandon himself, only yesterday, when I by accident met him, that she had asked him to think no more of her as she could never be his wife. He further said, with just the slightest trace of bitterness for him—for Hugh is the soul of generosity—that he had heard that I was the favoured individual."

"And so you will be, mark my words. She is sure to come to love you in time, if you are not too impatient."

"Time will tell," he replied with a sigh; "but I am afraid that, at this moment, her love is buried in John Brandon's grave."

"You must be mistaken. I assure you, there never was anything between them. Of course, as you know, John Brandon was always an off-hand, high-spirited young fellow, and liked Rose well enough, no doubt;

but never, I believe, as you appear to imagine."

"John Brandon was capable of deeper feeling than you probably imagine. It is true, as a lad, he was always full of tricks, and at the bottom of most of the wild pranks played at school, though he often got punished for the faults of others. Even when it was undeserved, he would never flinch from punishment, when he might have got off by telling who was the real culprit; for he had all an Irishman's contempt for an informer."

"Yes, so I have heard. Poor fellow! he was too daring, as his sad end shows. I feel sure, that you are wrong in your surmises, and that if she had a leaning at all to either of the Brandons, Hugh was the favourite."

"Do you know, I think that accounts for it all. John Brandon was not the sort of character to stand in the way of what he considered his brother's happiness. Under that appearance of levity, there was a self-sacrificing disposition, and I fully believe that, finding as he thought, how matters stood between Rose and his brother, may have caused his sudden departure for Africa."

"Oh, Mr. Talbot, you are letting your imagination run away with you."

"No; I believe I am right, although I believe it quite possible that the dear girl herself may never have realised the state of her feelings till this evening."

"Well, perhaps it may be as you say; but do not despair, for even supposing your surmise to be correct she cannot fail in the end to reward such devotion as yours."

"I trust she may," replied Talbot with a sigh. "I suppose, now, I must only leave it to time. I will go now, Mrs. Aylmer, but will call in the morning when

I hope to hear that the dear girl is better,"

In a few weeks after this, when the mail from South Africa arrived, Hugh Brandon received a letter from a gentleman named Hampson a friend of his brother John, and the representative of a leading London newspaper at the seat of war.

It was dated from Pietermaritzburg, and was as follows :—

HUGH BRANDON, ESQ., — — STREET, LIVERPOOL.

Dear Mr. Brandon,—Before you receive this letter the announcement of your brother's death will have reached you by telegram, for the unfortunate affair in which he was killed has excited the attention of the civilised world. It is felt here on all hands, even supposing the enemy did come upon the party which your brother accompanied in such great force as is represented, that such a panic-stricken flight of a party of well armed and equipped men, leaving one of their number to be slaughtered by these savages, is by no means creditable. As I dare say your brother may have mentioned my name to you, you will probably be aware that this was by no means the first campaign we had been engaged in together. I was highly delighted to find your brother a fellow-passenger coming out here. I need scarcely tell you he was one who could keep a whole army in good spirits, as I have often found under the most depressing circumstances. This time I must say my dear friend was not exactly himself on all occasions. I knew him intimately, and though none of the passengers who enjoyed his society so much on the way out would have observed it; it seemed to me as if sometimes (very rarely though, for he was a most plucky fellow) he was struggling against some crushing grief. When we arrived out here the excitement of following up and recording the progress of our arms of course engaged his attention, and I need

not tell you—for of course you, like everyone else, have read the splendid letters descriptive of the war from his brilliant pen—that never before were his wonderful powers more apparent than in this campaign. I began to think that I had been mistaken in my idea that he had some secret trouble, until a few days before his death, when one night he took me aside and placed in my hands the small package contained in this letter, which he directed me to forward to you in case “anything happened to him,” as he said. I, while of course undertaking the duty, joked him about it, saying that there was some love affair at the bottom of his unwonted seriousness, and that dashing Jack Brandon was caught at last. He took my bantering in good part, and said he would rely upon me, as there was no telling what might happen. I did not apprehend any danger to him, for though, as you are aware, his adventurous disposition often led him into positions of peril, his unbounded pluck and consummate address always pulled him through with flying colours. I little thought how soon I should have to fulfil the trust placed in my hands, for when he asked and obtained permission to join Lieutenant Brown’s party nobody thought their duty a more than usually dangerous one. He had no presentiment himself of more than ordinary peril, and when he was mounted and ready for the start he seemed in the highest spirits as he shook me by the hand. “I have that letter for your sweetheart all safe here,” said I to him, slapping my breast pocket. “You are a good fellow, Hampson, God bless you,” said he, smiling, and again warmly grasping my hand. In a moment more the party started, and that was the last I ever saw in life of the truest-hearted comrade any man might wish for. I have lost no time in writing to you and forwarding the enclosed. I will gather his effects up and send them

to you afterwards. I need scarcely say that you have my deepest sympathy (and I may say the same for every man here who knew your brother) in your terrible misfortune.—I remain, dear Mr. Brandon, faithfully yours

THOMAS HAMPSON.

Hugh read the letter to his uncle and sister, whose tears mingled with his own at the words honest Hampson had written of his friend.

They were still more moved at the sight of the enclosure, which was an envelope addressed to his brother, who on opening it found a small package, on the face of which was written—

“To be opened by my dear brother, Hugh, when he has made Rose Aylmer his happy wife, or when I am dead.”

It was dated only a few days before his death.

“Heaven rest the poor boy’s soul!” exclaimed Father MacMahon fervently and tearfully; and they echoed their uncle’s prayer.

“What can this mean?” said Hugh, with a look of undefined dread, as he opened the package.

He found a slip of paper dated some ten years back, and on it, in John’s well known hand, was written—

“Taken from the head of my little sweetheart, Rose Aylmer.”

With it, tied by a silken thread, was a lock of sunny hair, which Hugh Brandon knew only too well.

His sister’s eyes met his as she said—

“Do you remember that night, Hugh?”

“Right well. We were all happy boys and girls together, and John, as usual, the prime mover of all the fun and frolic.”

“Do you remember he borrowed a pair of scissors from me, and, going quietly behind Rose Aylmer, cut off a lock of her hair.”

“I can see it all before me this moment as plainly

as I can see the silken lock now. But a light begins to dawn upon me. This is more than the remembrance of a youthful frolic."

"What do you mean?"

"It is possible that John has sacrificed himself for me, for before he went away, the last night you may remember he passed here, I told him, as we came along, of how I hoped to win a wife. He did not know, I think, at first, who I meant, and encouraged me to persevere. I remember now that after I mentioned Rose Aylmer's name, he said not another word, but then we were close up to your door."

"And I recollect," said Father Peter, "what, perhaps, none of you noticed, that the poor boy seemed now and then to be low-spirited. I think, Hugh, there is something in what you say."

"I am sure there is. We have all been blind not to have seen it before."

"I am sure, though," said Mary Brandon, "that no words of affection ever passed between them, but I am now convinced that there was a mutual feeling, though all the while each was unaware of its existence in the other. It seems to me to be all now clear as day, and I have remarked that, for the last few weeks, just since about the time the sad telegram appeared, Rose has been ill and low-spirited. Poor John has more to mourn for him than we thought."

It was, indeed, so. Among the other letters of condolence was one from Gonzalvi, now comfortably installed in his position as a professor of St. Gregory's College, near London. He, too, tendered his sympathy to the afflicted family in their sad bereavement. He had never seen John Brandon, as it may be remembered that on the occasion when Hugh had introduced Gonzalvi (Antonio) behind the scenes of the Princess's Theatre the old man had just left, closely followed by

Griffo (Luigi), the instrument of the Carbonari, before the young man, now cut off so tragically, entered in search of his brother.

But, notwithstanding this, he was none the less a sincere sharer in the grief of the truest friends he had ever met in his twenty years pilgrimage—friends who had rescued him from the lowest depths of poverty, and from the most appalling and imminent danger.

From Mariana Hugh received the following letter—

My Dear Guardian—Mary has written to tell me of poor John's death. How I wish I could be with you to comfort you all. I only saw him, you may remember, on that happy night at your uncle's; but when I want to remember what he was like I have only to think of you. I have your photograph that Mary gave me, but you know that even that can only give the faintest idea of the good, kind guardian you are. Some day you must give me a real likeness of yourself, just like that in which you have painted me as the young Italian girl. How dreadful it is that I cannot come to you in your great grief, but you know best, and if you think it necessary for my poor grandfather's safety that I should not come home I must content myself. My grandfather writes to me every week to let me know how well and happy he is at St. Gregory's College, and tells me we must never forget our benefactors. It is so long since my mother died, and I was such a little child then that until now I had no thought of how much I owed to you and to Mary and to good old Uncle Peter, but now I see it all and I pray for you, night and day. Hoping Heaven may comfort you for the loss of our dear John, I remain, my dear guardian, your grateful and loving child,—
MARIANA.

It is needless to say that Hugh Brandon was much moved on reading this letter. It put in his mind, too,

that he had neglected his great picture lately. It had once before proved to him a great distraction under a sad affliction, and now again he found his work a solace to him, suffering as he was from grief at the loss of the noble brother who had, he fully believed, sacrificed himself for his happiness.

Mick Muldowney and his wife came to the Brandons with their honest and heart-felt sympathy. Hugh, who was much concerned, some months before, to hear of the persecution they had suffered through the machinations of Howler, could scarcely refrain from a smile when Mick told, in his own unconsciously droll way, the whole story of the dismemberment of the "body" and other details which had not appeared in the newspapers. Howler, it seemed, had never since that time appeared at the "Holy Lamp," and on the only occasion on which he was seen near Homer's Garden he had been hooted by the women and children.

Mick thought, as Howler had attempted to deceive Griffo, that the converted clown had been discarded by the Italian, and that there was now no longer any watch kept upon him. Mick little knew that the vengeance of the Carbonari never slept, and that at the very moment he had one of the instruments of the Secret Tribunal lodging with him under the guise of a simple-looking Italian street minstrel.

Griffo himself still made Liverpool his head-quarters, being seldom absent, except when he thought there was the chance of taking up a clue that required his own personal attention. He kept on his old lodging, where he was still known as Signor Luigi.

Just about the time that Hampson's letter came from South Africa, he was one night in his sitting-room, in close conference with Creppi, one of his agents, through whom, it may be remembered, he had been

able to fix the identity of Prince Gonzalvi with old Antonio the image-man. Creppi had just arrived from a journey.

"Well," said Griffo, "you think you have found the young girl at last."

"I am sure of it. You know we got all the advertisements of these Convent Bearding Schools, and now I have now tried at least a dozen of them?"

"Yes. Well, how about this Warwickshire School?"

"She is there."

"You appear confident, Creppi, but you forget that it is quite common for girls who are natives of other countries to be placed as boarders in these schools, and it is by no means quite certain that because you have found out there is a young Italian girl there that she is the one we are in search of."

"Yes; but the name and description and every thing else agree with my instructions."

"What is the name of the place?"

"Convent of Notre Dame, Templeton, Warwickshire."

"What is the post town?"

"Templeton."

"Let me see. Fillippo Bacchi is at present actually lodging at this Muldowney's, who does not in the least suspect him. I told him to watch carefully the letters which came to the house. I expect him here in a few moments."

Soon after, Bacchi himself appeared.

"Well; any news?" said Griffo

"No."

"Did you get a glimpse of the letters which came to Muldowney's since I saw you last?"

"I did. Being on good terms with the postman, I always manage to be about when he comes round in the morning and take the letters from him."

"Well ?"

"There have been but four during the week."

"Did you see the postmarks ?"

"Of three of them I did. Muldowney himself took in the fourth. One of the letters I took in was from Galway, the second had the Liverpool postmark, and looked like a circular or something of that kind, and on the third I noticed the address was in a lady's handwriting, and the postmark was Templeton."

"Templeton."

This was the exclamation of both Griffo and Creppi, as they exchanged glances of satisfaction.

"Why, Bacchi you told us you had no news," said Griffo. "You have brought us great news. We are on the track again. Creppi, you must go back again to Templeton. It is a small place, and the post office is kept you say by a woman at the general shop of the village. You can surely manage to get a glimpse of any letters that may come for the girl. It is a boy, you say, delivers the letters ?"

"Yes, I have spoken to him already."

"Well, you must cultivate his acquaintance still more, and it will be strange if we don't track him old fox, Gonzalvi, to his den, having now got the clue to the young one."

Just then a knock came to the door, and they could hear it opening, and a boy's voice asking—

"Does Mr. Loojoy live here ?"

"Yes."

"Telegram for him."

The girl knocked at the door of the room and handed in the telegram.

Griffo tore it open, and as he glanced at it a look of fiendish triumph lit up his features.

"Bravo" he cried. "Victory ! we have found the den of the old fox himself, See !"

The other two members of the Carbonari read the telegram with savage delight.

This was what it said :—"He is here in London. I saw him not two minutes since. Come at once, I command you, and finish the work commenced twenty years since in the Pauline Chapel."

"Let me see," said Griffo, "what is the hour? Ha! I can just catch the London train from Lime-street. You, Creppi, start back for Templeton in the morning, and you, Bacchi, get back to your lodgings. Muldowney's is a regular house, and you must not get a bad name by keeping late hours."

The worthy trio then parted.

In less than half an hour Griffo was on his way to London, with the full intention of carrying out upon their victim the vengeance of the Carbonari.

CHAPTER XI.—FLIGHT OF GONZALVI.



HE Telegram which sent Griffo speeding on his mission of vengeance had stated what was correct. Gonzalvi was in London.

He had that afternoon come to town to make some purchases and execute several commissions for the college.

The last place he had to call at was the book-seller's, Dickenson's, in St. Paul's Churchyard, where he made his selection of the works required, being principally classical authors, and gave instructions to have the books forwarded to St. Gregory's College, Ashfield.

He was going down Ludgate-hill, on his way to Blackfriars Station, when a playbill in a window ar-

rested his attention. From this he saw that Signor Roni was playing at Drury-lane. It struck him that it was a good opportunity to call upon the famous basso to thank him for the kindness he had received from him in Liverpool.

He found on inquiring at the station that there was a good train to Ashfield, which was a village some eight or ten miles from London, a couple of hours later than he had at first intended returning home.

The later train would still bring him back in tolerably good time, so that he resolved to wait and see his friend.

He, therefore, on leaving the station, struck into Fleet-street. The unwonted sights and sounds of this busy thoroughfare and the Strand had an exhilarating effect upon him, accustomed as he had now been for some time to the quiet, studious life at St. Gregory's.

Passing up Catherine-street, he inquired for the theatre, which he soon found. He made his way to the stage-door, and asked for Signor Roni.

"He is on just now," said the doorkeeper, "but he won't be long. Who shall I say?"

Gonsalvi hesitated a moment, and it then occurred to him that Roni would only remember him as Antonio, so he gave that name, adding—

"A friend from Liverpool, tell him."

"Bill!" called the doorkeeper.

"Well?"

"Is Signor Roni off yet?"

"Just a-coming now," replied a boy's voice from inside.

"Come here."

A boy partly opened a sort of vestibule door and put his head out.

"Tell Signor Roni that a friend of his, Signor An-

tonio, from Liverpool, wants to see him."

"All right" said the boy, who went off on his errand.

Presently Roni himself appeared, and, seeing Antonio, came forward and shook him heartily by both hands, exclaiming—

"My darlin' boy, how is every bone in your body?" and so cordial was the grasp he gave Antonio's thin fingers that one would have thought he was bent on following up his enquiry by practically testing for himself the condition of Gonzalvi's anatomy.

"Happier and in better health than I have been for many years, thanks to the kindness of your friends, the Brandons and their good uncle."

"But come along inside man. I have a few minutes to spare, and so you can tell me how you are doing."

Talking as they went, Roni brought his friend into his dressing-room.

"And so you saw my name on the playbill."

"Yes, but as this is the first time I have come to London since I have been at Ashfield, it was a fortunate circumstance, for I might be for a hundred years in that secluded village and never hear of you. However, when I saw you were at Drury Lane I thought it would be ungrateful after your kindness if I didn't come to see you.

"As for the kindness, that is all in your imagination, but I would never have forgiven you, if I heard you had been so near and did not look me up. That Luigi was a real play-boy. Just as I expected, the black-guard didn't turn up in Dublin, where we opened at the Royal on the Monday after we left Liverpool. Luigi was'n't his real name, you tell me?"

"No his name is Griffo. I am surprised at myself I did not recognise him at first, but, after all, it is not so strange, seeing that it is twenty years since I saw

him—a wiry looking young rascal of the Lungara in Rome.”

“It was wise of you to leave Liverpool, for he’d be sure to find you out.”

“Yes, thanks to Father MacMahon, I am now in a secure retreat.”

“And so you tell me you are a professor at St. Gregory’s. Do you mind that, now? Sure there’s a sister’s son of my own there, a student—one Peter Daly.”

“I know him—a fine lad, and a great favourite of mine. You have heard of John Brandon’s death.”

“Ah! my poor boy! Indeed, then, I did. Didn’t the whole world hear of it, and its heartily sorry I was for the same news, for two finer young fellows never stepped than the same Brandons.”

They chatted on for some time longer, when, after a while, there was a knock.

“Well?”

The door was opened a little, and the boy handed in a card.

“Send him in.”

Then, seeing Gonzalvi taking up his hat to leave, Roni said—

“Surely you are not going yet?”

“I think my time is up; besides, I expect to be in town again on Thursday, so I will look in at your hotel when you have more spare time.”

Roni then rose to accompany his visitor out.

“Well, if you must, Signor Antonio, I suppose you must; but I’ll expect you on Thursday—mind now, or there will be ructions. Any way, I am heartily glad to see you again, and to hear you are so comfortable. Keep an eye on Peter. I’ll see you to the door.”

“There, Signor Roni. I can find my way now,” said Gonzalvi as they approached the vestibule; “so on Thursday——”

"I shall expect you ; so fail not at your peril."

They parted—Roni again giving his old friend a hearty shake by the hand.

As Antonio went out he passed the person who had been waiting for Roni.

He was a gentleman in evening dress, as if he had just come round from the front of the house, which was the case.

"Ha ! Count Fritz, old boy—welcome," said Roni. ' Why, I am seeing all my old friends to-night'

"The old gentleman who has just left you has gone off in a great hurry. A friend of yours?"

"Yes, and of the Brandons, you remember."

"I ought to remember. Poor Jack ! Many a jovial hour we had at Vienna, and what a sad end—butchered by savages. The old gentleman is a friend of the Brandons, you say. Settled in London—eh?"

"Well, not exactly, but not far off. He is a professor at St. Gregory's College, at Ashford."

"Ah, yes, I remember now. I think you told me you had a nephew there."

"The very place. But will you not come into my den. Coming from the warm theatre—I saw you in front when I was on just now—you will take cold in this draughty passage."

"No, I think not. I won't take up your time now ; besides, if I remember rightly, you are on in the first scene in the next act, and I don't think you have any time to spare."

Roni looked at his watch.

"Gad—no," he exclaimed. "Ha, there's that young imp of a call-boy. I must leave you, but come round after the next act."

Count Fritz promised to do so, and they parted.

* * * * *

When Gonzalvi got outside, instead of going towards

Blackfriars, to be in time to catch the train that would take him home to Ashford, he faced exactly in an opposite direction, and moved along as quickly as he could, without going quite so fast as excite unusual attention.

Presently he found himself in Museum-street. Here he hailed a cab which was coming along, which, being unengaged, he entered.

"Where to?" asked the cabman.

"Euston."

Arrived there, he discharged the vehicle, and, entering the booking office, asked for a ticket for Dublin.

"Your train has gone long since," said the booking clerk. "The Irish mail leaves at 8.25."

"When is the next train going northward?"

"Not until midnight."

Gonzalvi looked disappointed on hearing this. He turned away and left the station.

Walking into the first decent-looking restaurant he met with, he called for some refreshment. He ate with poor appetite, and was evidently very ill at ease.

The old *hunted* look had come back to the unfortunate man's face. He tried to read the evening paper, but soon threw it aside, as he found he could not sufficiently concentrate his mind upon it to get through even a single line.

He then went out into the street and walked up and down, the time passing so slowly that it seemed to him that twelve o'clock would never come.

However, midnight did come at last, and found Gonzalvi seated in the railway carriage, and rapidly leaving London behind, but not half rapidly enough for him, and as from time to time he looked out of the open window next which he sat he thought they would never get away from the lights of the great city.

There were two other passengers in the carriage with him. He never spoke, but eyed them, when they were not looking in his direction, closely.

These two, in the intervals when they were not dozing, entered into conversation with each other. Gonzalvi noticed that their talk was principally of betting, of races that had taken place, and of others that were yet to come off; and they spoke in a jargon that he could not understand but had often heard before when travelling in England or waiting in public places where men congregate.

His two companions seemed well prepared for a night journey, and had soft caps to replace their hats and comfortable rugs. After a while they dropped off asleep, and at length Gonzalvi himself dozed off also, the three being wakened up when the train stopped at Rugby, soon after two o'clock.

The two men got out for refreshments, and in a few minutes returned, but Gonzalvi never moved from his place.

There was a train from the north, which had come in a little before them and which also stopped a short time at Rugby. Presently it started, and as the train was slowly getting up speed Gonzalvi had a pretty good view of the passengers in the various carriages as they moved past.

Suddenly he was seized with alarm, and it was with a most powerful effort of self-command that he managed to conceal his agitation from his travelling companions, for in one of the carriages of the train that was passing he recognised the profile of his enemy—*Griff*. Happily, he had not seen Gonzalvi, who did not breathe again freely until the train which he was in, after a brief interval, which to him seemed interminable, again started, when every mile of progress made placed two between him and the man who was

hastening to London to seek his blood.

* * * * *

When Griffo arrived at Euston he called a night cab and told the man to drive him to Farringdon-street. This was not his ultimate destination, but for some reason of his own he dismissed the cab there, and then made his way on foot, passing into Hatton-garden and Saffron-hill, out of which he turned into a side street, which, if seen by daylight, would be found to bear a strong family resemblance, both in the character of its inhabitants and the nature of their avocations to Homer's Garden in Liverpool.

Griffo stopped opposite a small, mean-looking, shop, the shutters of which of course were up. There was, however, he could see through the white blind in the window overhead, a faint light, which indicated the presence of a watcher. First looking round cautiously to see that no one was watching him, he stepped back into the street, and, picking up a small pebble, threw it against the window.

The blind was pulled aside and the sash raised a little. A man's head then appeared.

"Is that Signor Mamiani?" asked Griffo, in a low tone.

"Hush, Griffo. Someone may be about. I will let you in."

In a little while the door was opened, Griffo was admitted, and they went upstairs.

As the two men stood facing each other at that moment the memory came back to them of such another occasion, now some twenty years since, in Rome, when the one had summoned the other to do that deed of blood in the Pauline Chapel which had astonished the world.

Griffo, as we have seen, had become stouter, and this, with the military service he had seen, had given

to his form a massiveness of which there was no trace in the lithe youth first met in the wine shop in the Lungara. The expression of his countenance had altered little, only—added to the closely set, fierce looking eyes and hooked nose—his face had acquired a somewhat bloated look which gave one the idea of a vulture which had been gorging itself.

Time appeared to have changed Mamiani less than Griffo. There was still the same stateliness of form, with perhaps the addition of somewhat more solidity. The light brown curling hair had become a trifle less luxuriant perhaps, but there was still the same frank pleasant-looking face that so strongly belied the blackness of the nature within. He was in evening dress on the present occasion, which caused him to look singularly out of keeping with the surroundings of the place.

"You have lost no time, Griffo."

"It is, as you know, little more than six hours since I received your telegram in Liverpool. But where is Prince Gonzalvi?"

"I have discovered that he is a professor at St. Gregory's College, at Ashfield, a village some eight or ten miles from here. You will have time to get two or three hours sleep and still be able to catch the early train from Blackfriars."

"Is there no fear of him giving us the slip?"

"He is a wary old fox, but I think we have him this time. You had better lie down, as you have the time to spare."

An old Italian came at a signal from Mamiani, and took Griffo to an upper room, where there was little furniture, but a tolerably comfortable bed in one corner. Divesting himself quickly of his clothing he got into bed, and, being tired from the long journey, was sound asleep in a few minutes. It was still early morning when a tap at the door roused Griffo instantly.

He sprang from bed, and, as he had not had sufficient sleep for a proper night's rest, he made ample use of a large tub of cool, clear water, which, with soap and a rough towel, he found ready for him, and then felt considerably refreshed.

Coming down stairs, he found the old Italian had a comfortable breakfast provided for him, of which he partook heartily.

Being as yet early morning, all was quiet outside when he made his way into the street. He was not long in reaching Blackfriars, from whence he took the train to Ashfield.

Arrived there, he went into the bar parlour of the Red Lion, the inn close to the station, and called for a glass of sherry. The landlord himself came in with the drink.

"A pleasant village this of yours," said Griffo.

"Well, fairish."

"Not much stir, I should think. Any buildings of interest to a stranger in the neighbourhood?"

"Well, no, except perhaps the college over there."

"What college is that?"

"St. Gregory's. It is about two miles from here, up the road there you can see right facing this window. Hullo! talking of St. Gregory's, there's one of the men from the College farm coming down the road in a trap."

Griffo stood up beside the host of the Red Lion, and looked out of the window up the road by which the man was approaching.

In another minute the trap was pulled up. The landlord went out to the door, Griffo closely following him.

"You're out early this morning, Jarvis."

Yes, Mr. Jolliffe; there's been a rare kick up at our place. One of the masters that went to Lunnion yesterday hasn't turned up."

"What—not been home all night?"

"No, and they're afraid he's lost, or something happened to him, being a foreigner."

"A foreigner," said Jolliffe; "what—not that nice old gentleman that went by the 3.15 train yesterday afternoon—Signor Antonio?"

"Yes, he was sent to order some things for the College. He had to go a good deal up and down like, besides going to Dickenson's, in St. Paul's Churchyard, about some books. I've been sent to see after him now."

It is needless to say that Griffo took in every word.

"I suppose you want to put up the horse and trap," said the landlord. "You haven't much time, so I'll just call Dick to take 'um round for you."

"Thank you. That'll just give me time for a drop o' beer."

Jarvis drained off the beer, and, wiping his lips, bade good morning to the landlord, after which he walked into the station and took a ticket for Blackfriars.

The landlord was now busy seeing the horse and trap put up, so Griffo took the opportunity of quietly leaving the Red Lion without any further conversation with him or anyone else belonging to the inn. He, too, then walked into the station and took a ticket back to town, for it was evident to him that his intended victim had taken alarm, or that something had befallen him in London.

The train shortly afterwards came up, and Jarvis having entered a railway carriage, Griffo followed him. They were by themselves, and Griffo opened up a conversation.

"That's unfortunate," he said, "about the poor old gentleman being missing from your place."

"Yes. I suppose you heard me telling Jolliffe."

"I did. I was waiting at the Red Lion for the train just as you came up. I suppose you are going to the bookseller's to inquire after him."

"Yes, that's the likeliest place, but I'll try all the other places he had to call at as well."

"Have you no idea of any friends of his in London that he may have stopped the night with?"

"No; our principal doesn't think he knew anybody in London, or he would have told me to try if he had gone to any friends."

"Had he no friends anywhere else in the country?"

"Well now, I did hear he had some friends in Liverpool and somewhere in Warwickshire."

Griffo knew this better than Jarvis, but of course said nothing.

When they got down at Blackfriars, Griffo said—

"I am much interested in the old gentleman. If you have no objection I will go as far as the bookseller's with you."

After having a drink together, they went to the bookseller's in St. Paul's Churchyard.

There they were informed that the gentleman from St. Gregory's had called on the previous evening. He had stayed some time there, being apparently much interested in some choice editions of the classics. He made his selections, and gave the orders for the books required. These were to be packed up and sent off next morning, he said and they were then ready for despatch. They understood from the old gentlemen that he was then going straight to take the train for Ashfield. That was the last they had seen of him.

Griffo, on leaving the bookseller's, asked his companion to have another drink, and Jarvis thought he had never met a nicer gentleman, and often afterwards mentioned the fact to his rustic friends at Ash-

field. "He mightn't be the best-looking chap going," said Jarvis, "but he was a real downright good sort, and so feeling for poor Signor Antonio, too."

Griffo accompanied Jarvis to all the other places where the missing man was to have called, but could hear no more of him than that he had duly executed his commissions, the bookseller's being evidently the last place they could hear of where he had been.

Griffo duly reported Antonio's disappearance to Mamiani. It was inexplicable. However, for several days Ashfield was duly watched, but Gonzalvi never returned, and it was evident that the Carbonari had again lost the trace of their intended victim.

* * * *

Finding his old friend did not call upon him as promised, Signor Roni made a run out to St. Gregory's College himself one morning to see him. and also to hear how his nephew was progressing.

His departure from Blackfriars, his arrival at Ashfield, his taking a gig from the Red Lion, and driving over to St. Gregory's, were all duly noted by Griffo, (himself of course unobserved), as well as Roni's return to town.

Griffo, however, was none the wiser from watching these movements of the great basso, as one was as much in the dark with regard to Gonzalvi's whereabouts as the other.

Father MacMahon was much surprised one morning at getting two letters—one from the principal of St. Gregory's College, and the other from Roni, both telling of the strange and sudden disappearance of Signor Antonio, and asking if he had been heard of in Liverpool.

The good father's uneasiness at the contents of these letters was not of long duration, for the next post brought him a letter from Gonzalvi himself written

from Dublin, which explained the cause of his sudden flight.

He described how for the first time since his engagement at St. Gregory's he had been sent to London to execute various commissions for the College; how after making his calls he had been attracted by the playbill to go and see Signor Roni at Drury-Lane; and how he had suddenly come across a man whose face he at the first glance thought he knew—another moment revealing to his mind the absolute certainty that he had just seen and probably been seen by his arch-enemy, Aurelio Mamiani. Dreading this, he resolved upon instant flight. He feared to go back to Liverpool, and thought Dublin would be as safe a place for him as any he could think of, besides being a city where he thought he possibly might get some employment. He was too late to book for Dublin that night, but made his way as far as Crewe, from whence he passed over by Holyhead to Ireland on the following day. He begged that Father MacMahon, without revealing any more of his story than was necessary, would acquaint the principal of St. Gregory's with what had happened, and at the same time convey his gratitude for the kindness he had met with during the time he had been an inmate of the College. He had not yet heard of any employment in Dublin that would suit him. He had answered several advertisements, but had not been successful. He was, however, tolerably sanguine of getting something to do. He was not so strong, he said, as he could wish, but no doubt that had been occasioned by the recent anxiety and excitement.

He was not, he added, short of funds, for fortunately he had on his person on the night of his flight almost the whole of his recently-paid quarter's salary.

As, from various circumstances he had heard of, he

had reason to suppose that letters to his granddaughter had in some way been tampered with, he asked Father MacMahon to make Mariana acquainted with his present position, and in such a way that there would be no fear of his enemies again getting on his track.

During the next month or two Gonzalvi occasionally wrote. He had not any permanent employment, but still his letters were hopeful. At last, for over a month, no letter came from him, so that his friends in Liverpool became somewhat uneasy about him, more particularly as he had mentioned in one of his letters about his health not being good.

CHAPTER XII.—RETURNED TO LIFE.



ONE day our old friend Giacomo, from Homer's Garden, was returning from New Brighton with his organ just as the Dublin steamer had come up to the Landing-stage and put her passengers ashore.

Giacomo was going up one of the bridges when he saw before him a figure he thought he knew. It was an old man, evidently very weak, slowly making his way up the bridge, and every now and again having to lean against the side for support.

Giacomo came up closer to him, and at length exclaimed—

"Why, Signor Antonio, is it you? I thought I knew you."

The old man was so weak that he seemed about to all, and probably would have done so had not the organ-man just then given him the support of his arm.

"Do you not know me, Signor Antonio?"

"I think I have seen you before. Ah, now I rem-

ember. You are Giacomo, from Homer's Garden."

"The same ; but are you not well ?"

"I am afraid not, Giacomo. I was in the hospital in Dublin for a month, and was discharged as being better. Having no home to go to in Dublin, as a last resource I thought I would make my way over here. I find I am not so well as I thought. I suppose I should have written to some of my good friends here to say I was coming."

Giacomo, seeing the old man was very weak, got him to sit down upon his organ, while he ran to the top of the bridge and called one of the cars that were on the pier.

The cabman came down the bridge, and taking one arm of Gonzalvi, while Giacomo took the other they led him up and placed him in the cab. Giacomo then returned for his organ, and hoisting it upon the cab they drove off to Homer's Garden.

Here they were met at the door by Mrs. Muldowney, who was at once delighted and grieved at seeing her old lodger again.

Gonzalvi was so weak that Mrs. Muldowney insisted on his going to bed at once, while she sent for Father MacMahon, who soon came bringing with him also a friend of his Dr. Graham. The doctor, when he saw Gonzalvi, said that the greatest care must be taken of him. He had but just recovered from a severe illness, and it was a pity he had been obliged to cross the Channel in such a condition. Indeed, there was, he said, much danger of a serious relapse.

Notwithstanding all the care and kindness bestowed upon him, the Doctor's fears were verified, and Gonzalvi became dangerously ill—so much so that Father MacMahon administered to him the rites of the Church.

The same afternoon Mrs. Muldowney was seated at

tea by herself in her little parlour, the street door being open as usual, when she heard a voice with a slight foreign accent, calling in—

“Well, and how is our dear old friend this afternoon?”

Mrs. Muldowney stood up, and going to her own door, and curtsying respectfully, said.—

“I declare, your reverence, he’s a dale better since Father MacMahon was here in the morning! Before that I thought the poor ould gentleman wasn’t long for this world.”

“I am delighted to hear you say you think he is improving. Father MacMahon has more sick calls than he could well manage this afternoon, so he asked me to come over and see our friend.”

“Thanks; your reverence will be one of the foreign clargy that’s giving the mission at the chapel beyond, thin?”

“Yes. Can I go up to see our dear friend?”

“Certainly, your reverence. Folly me, if you plaze, and I’ll show you the room. ’Tis but a poor place for the likes of him, but sure we’re doing our best, and the best can do no more.’

Mrs. Muldowney then showed him upstairs, and into Gonzalvi’s room, and, softly closing the door, left him alone with the sick man.

He was tall and stout, and so dark-complexioned that, being closely shaven, the olive-tinted skin shewed almost blue where the razor had gone over. He put his hat down on a chair by the door, and turned to approach the bed, but stumbled slightly over a small box on the floor, which he had not noticed.

The slight noise wakened the sick man, who turned in the bed, asking feebly—

“Is that you, Father MacMahon?”

The other did not reply, but put his hand into his breast pocket as if feeling for something, at the same

time approaching the bed. Gonzalvi now caught a glimpse of his face, and screamed in mortal terror—"Griffo!"

The "priest" now rapidly drew from his breast pocket a knife and rushed at Gonzalvi, who, however, the same instant, from underneath the bedclothes, drew a pistol and fired it at his assailant.

The ball struck him in the arm near the shoulder, and caused him to drop the weapon. He, however, grasped Gonzalvi with his left hand and dragged him out of bed, at the same time looking about for the knife.

In the meantime, however, Mrs. Muldowney, hearing the report of the pistol, ran rapidly upstairs, and, bursting into the room, was horrified to find the "priest" seeking the life of his penitent. Without the slightest hesitation she seized the poker from the fireplace, and dealt Griffo (for he was the sham priest) a blow over the knuckles just as he had recovered the knife, and, in quick succession, another well-directed blow was given with the whole force of Kitty's muscular arm, which caused the assassin to fall senseless to the floor.

The noise brought such of the neighbours as were about quickly upon the scene, and while some tenderly put Gonzalvi into bed again, others crowded round the prostrate "priest," who was beginning to show signs of returning consciousness.

"Send for No. 9, and give him in charge," somebody said.

"Stay a moment," said a gentleman who had entered with the others, but who, in the excitement had not been noticed. He was on one knee, intently looking into the face of the fallen man. "Don't send for the police yet, I think I know this man."

Mrs. Muldowney, who sat exhausted, after her late

display of valour, surrounded by sympathising friends, now started up in great agitation on hearing the stranger's voice, exclaiming—

"Saints above purtect us, 'tis John Brandon's voice I hear, or is it his ghost?"

"No ghost at all, my dear Mrs. Muldowney, but Jack Brandon, himself."

"But it can't be. Sure you wor kilt be the Zulus. But, glory be to goodness, if it is yourself come back to life, it couldn't be a bigger merrikle than to see the clargy murtherin their penitents."

"If I am not mistaken, this fellow is no more a priest than I am," said John Brandon,—for astonishing as it might seem, he, indeed, it was.

Griffo now opened his eyes and looked vacantly at the group which surrounded him. John Brandon at once asked—

"Do you not remember me?"

Griffo, his eyes having still the same vacant look, shook his head.

"What, do you not remember the Zouave Lieutenant?"

A flash of intelligence came into Griffo's eyes and he nodded his head in the affirmative.

"Now, you remember how we two lay wounded side by side on the field of battle, and I was dying with thirst, when you gave me—your enemy—a drink from your flask. For that good turn, I will save you from falling into the hands of the police, if I can, though I don't understand the mystery about your present dress and your attempt on the life of this old gentleman. However, as you yourself appear to have come off the worst in the matter, I dare say I can persuade these good people to let you go without hindrance."

Another gentleman now entered the room. It was

Signor Roni, whose company was again at the Princess's Theatre, and who, hearing of his old friend's illness, had called to see him.

It may be remembered that he had only once before met Brandon, but he now at once recognised him, and with amazement exclaimed—

"Heavens above, surely this is John Brandon returned from the grave!" and he joyfully, and with even more than his accustomed vigour, grasped his friend's hand.

Then, as he looked at the prostrate man, he cried out—

"Wonders will never cease. May I never sin if it isn't that thief Luigi, and still following the butchering business by all appearances."

Then going to the bed, he leaned tenderly over Gonzalvi, and asked—

"Well, and how are you, old friend?"

"I was a good deal better this afternoon, but this last attempt has shaken me dreadfully."

"No wonder. The infernal rascal!" said Roni, looking fiercely at Griffo, who had managed to crawl over and sit up, leaning his back against the wall.

The Basso continued—

"Now tell me what made you run away from London, the moment you left me that night at Drury Lane? They told me at Saint Gregory's that that was the very last trace of you they could find."

"Because I met my arch-enemy."

"What, this rascal here?"

"No. His master."

"Who?"

"Aurelio Mamiani."

"Where was that?"

"Asking for you at the stage entrance to Drury Lane."

"Nonsense, man, I am afraid your head is a little confused from your illness and this attack."

"No, I am sure it was the man."

"I declare to you now, there was no such person called on me that night."

"I am certain it was he. I met him face to face as I was leaving you, though I believe *he* didn't think I recognised *him*."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Roni, laughing, "This is too good a joke. Why, man, that was Count Fritz, of the Austrian Embassy, a friend of John Brandon's here. You remember, Brandon, introducing us to each other in the smokeroom of your hotel."

Here the wounded man, who appeared to be listening, and whose eyes burned with a fierce glare when he heard the Austrian Embassy mentioned, called Roni to his side."

"Do you," he said, slowly and feebly, but emphatically, "remember *me* in the smokeroom that evening?"

"You!" said Roni, with some surprise; and then reflected. "By the powers, yes, I do!"

"And who was the gentleman to whom you say you were introduced?"

"Count Fritz, an *attache* of the Austrian Embassy in London."

"You are wrong."

"How?"

"That was Aurelio Mamiani."

Brandon and Roni looked at each other and at the sick man in amazement.

At length Brandon seemed struck by a sudden inspiration, and said—

"He is right. This must be so. I remember once, in Vienna, Fritz getting too much champagne, and over his cups telling me something from which I in-

ferred that at the time when the Austrians held part of Italy he did some secret service, for which he got a large reward."

Then, turning to Griffo, he said—

"Was there not some place where your side were repulsed, and you suspected treachery?"

"Yes, Perugia, and the traitor lies there,—Prince Gonzalvi."

"You are wrong. The traitor—for he confessed it to me in his half drunken state—was Count Fritz, who I now see must have been simply an Austrian spy, or, in other words, Aurelio Mamiani, if you will."

Griffo now seemed as if lost in reflection, or overcome by weakness, keeping his eyes closed. When he again opened them they had a fierce gleam, and he said—

"I now know the traitor. Will you, gentlemen, take me from hence? Prince Gonzalvi, forgive me. It is you who have been a true patriot. But it is not too late yet."

At his request a cab was procured, and Griffo was moved to the lodgings he formerly occupied near London-road.

Later on, Mick Muldowney, who had that day been on an extensive round with his perambulating emporium, arrived, and was of course thunderstruck at the extraordinary developments which had taken place. He was specially proud of his wife's prowess.

"Bedad, Kitty," said he, "you would make the rale sojer. Masther Jack, if you had a few hairaes like her trained to the poker drill they'd make smithereens of the unfortunate Zulus; and, begob, the old gentleman here would make as good a sojer as any of them. Wasn't it nate, the way he settled the black-muzzled blackguard?"

It was, indeed, fortunate that Gonzalvi was so well prepared against the attack made upon him. The won-

der was that he had managed to keep the fact of his having a weapon concealed near him from the knowledge of those who had been in such close attendance upon him ; but since the previous attack he was never without a loaded revolver within reach—so conscious was he that the ever-watchful eye of the Carbonari was seeking him out.

When Dr. Graham arrived, he was astonished to find Gonzalvi so much better than could possibly have been expected. He ascribed a good deal of the improvement to the relief from the mental strain of twenty years which the disclosures now made must have brought about.

There was a happy re-union that evening at Father MacMahon's to celebrate John Brandon's return from the grave.

There was, of course, the good old *Soggarth* himself, and Mary and Hugh ; and, after a little while, Stephen Talbot, who had also heard the good news, and who, by the way, had lately been a pretty constant visitor, came in and offered his heart-felt congratulations. Indeed, to do him the justice he deserved, none felt more truly rejoiced than he on the present occasion, where a less generous nature might have only regarded it in the light of the return of a probably successful rival.

John Brandon, that evening, described his escape from death.

It was true, he said, that his comrades had seen him falling as they had described, struck by several Zulu assegais, but his bodily presence in that happy family group was, he considered, a tolerably convincing proof that they had not, as they thought, buried him. The fact was, he said, that the bodies of the men who were slain were stripped by the Zulus and so mutilated that it would have been almost impossible to have recogni-

sed any of them. As there were still some men missing after the flight of the party, it was difficult to tell the exact number of those who had been really killed ; but, as Jack Brandon had certainly been seen to fall, they naturally concluded that his must at all events be one of the dead bodies they had found on their return. Then again, in the hurried burial of the bodies that took place consequent on the dread of another surprise, there was not much time to spend in trying to recognise the slain. In the party of Zulus was a European named Diego. He was an adventurer who had been, at one time or other, nearly all over the world, and he had just at this time managed to smuggle over the frontier of the neighbouring Portuguese settlement a large quantity of arms and ammunition which he had just disposed of on favourable terms to the Zulus. While the party were engaged in stripping the bodies of the fallen men, Diego recognised Brandon as one he had met in Cuba at a time when he had been engaged in running a cargo of arms for the insurrectionists in the island. Here Brandon had in some way befriended him and although Diego had never been much overburdened with conscience, he still had some gratitude. At his intercession, John Brandon, who was found to be still living though badly wounded in several places, was carried to the nearest kraal. Here Diego tended him with such care and skill that after a time he recovered, and, as may well be imagined, was grateful to his preserver. By means of Diego's assistance and influence, he was, when sufficiently strong, able to push on to Delagoa Bay, from whence he reached Aden in a Portuguese trading vessel, and afterwards came on home by the over-land route.

On the day after John Brandon's return, his brother Hugh went to see Gonzalvi, and was pleased to find Mariana (who had been telegraphed for the night be-

fore) already by the bedside of her grandfather. She was in high spirits, for now, all danger to her grandfather being removed, she was to have a special holiday. She was also rejoiced to see her dear guardian again, and made him promise to take her to see his wonderful picture, now the chief attraction at the local exhibition, as soon as Gonzalvi would be able to go out.

There were three circumstances which occurred soon after this which John Brandon thought there ought not to be much difficulty in dovetailing together.

He called to ask at the house where he lodged for Luigi (the name Griffo still went by there), about ten days after his attempt on the life of Gonzalvi, and he found the Italian had that morning gone off—left the town for good, his landlady thought. This was incident number one.

A few days later Brandon had occasion to run up to London, and there heard that it was the common gossip of the clubs that Count Fritz must have got into sudden disgrace at the court of Vienna and had been suddenly recalled. One thing was certain, that the portly and jovial attaché was never again seen at the Austrian Embassy, nor at any of his well-known places of resort. That was circumstance number two.

Circumstance number three was of a decidedly startling character, and was as follows :—A few days later still the whole country was horrified at the intelligence that the remains of a man cut up in pieces were found under an arch of one of the bridges over the Thames, in London. No clue was ever discovered as to the perpetrator of the deed, or the circumstances connected with what had evidently been a dreadful murder.

Our story has now reached a point at which the “intelligent reader” can have very little difficulty in imagining the rest. However, as it is hoped that

some, if not all, of the characters have excited either sympathy or interest, a few final words as to what ultimately became of each and all of these will no doubt be looked for.

It can readily be imagined that the most joyful reunion of all for John Brandon on his return to life and friends was his meeting with Rose Aylmer.

Their mutual friends having for some time had a knowledge of how these two evidently regarded each other, it would be strange if in a short time each—Jack Brandon and Rose Aylmer—did not hear from the other's lips that old, old story which was no doubt told in the Garden of Eden. The fitting sequel to all this must of course be that the re-union following upon John Brandon's happy return must be prolonged into a union for life. The arrangements for this, therefore, became a solemn and most important affair for the lady friends of the intended happy pair.

When the auspicious day arrived there was decidedly no-one who could more appropriately and effectually tie the knot than Father Peter. The bride was given away by her father, Mr. Aylmer, with much dignity of deportment and with real pleasure, for the old gentleman had previously declared to a friend that he had always thought there was something in John Brandon, the only pity being, he said, that he had never turned his attention to trade, for he would have made 'a capital man of business, and a splendid partner, sir—splendid, and worth a whole shipload of his brother, the painter.'

Mrs. Aylmer, too, was present at the ceremony, and rejoiced at the happiness she felt sure was now in store for her dear child.

Stephen Talbot, magnanimous to the last, was Jack's best man. It was remarked (but then these critics are such uncharitable people) that he went to the sac-

rifice with wonderful cheerfulness, and more than one of his friends hinted that it was because he had for a fellow-victim Mary Brandon, who was one of the bridesmaids. More than that; when it was observed how attentive Talbot was to Miss Brandon, the same critical friends thought they now began to see through the reason of the young cotton-broker's visits to Uncle Peter's lately. It was quite evident, they thought, that when down-hearted at not succeeding in his suit with Rose Aylmer, if he had gone to her friend for consolation he must not only have succeeded in winning from Mary Brandon the required consolation, but her heart also, leaving, as was only right, "his own in return."

Time, no doubt, would tell, but then these were the kind of rumours always flying about at wedding parties.

It must be confessed that Signor Roni, who was in great force at the wedding, was the principal delinquent in spreading these reports.

"Bedad, Jack!" said he, when the health of the bride and bridegroom had been duly proposed, "'tis your turn now to play the hero, but some that have appeared in minor characters to-day will before long be playing the principal parts themselves, or I am very much mistaken. So I give you a toast—"Our next festive meeting," and he looked knowingly at Talbot, while the toast was being enthusiastically honoured.

After this, at the bride's request, the great basso gave a song in his best style, in honour, he said, of "the day that was in it" and of the venerable celebrant of the wedding. In the song was the following verse—

"Who on the wedding-day!
Soggarth aroon!
Made our poor cabin gay!
Soggarth aroon!"

"The remainder of the verse is a little premature now, but please goodness it will come all right in good time—eh, Jack," Roni said, as he resumed—

"And did both laugh and sing,
Making our hearts to ring,
At the glad christening—
Soggarth aroon."

And John Brandon, following Roni's bad example, must needs go poking his fun at his brother Hugh.

"Did you ever hear of such a thing?" he said. "Just because I have carried off the prize these two fellows have been striving for, here's Hugh declares he intends to become a hermit, and that in future Art is the only bride whose smiles he will ever seek."

"Don't believe it," said Roni. "That's only his cunning."

"He might as well say he'd marry one of his pictures,"

"Or the original of one of them," suggested Roni wickedly.

"Exactly. Why then it would only be what I told him long ago, before he knew his own mind."

"He's coming on, though," said Roni.

The ladies were beginning to suggest that John Brandon and Signor Roni must really be put out if they persisted in these frightful carryings on; however, they were saved from having to inflict any such penalty by the announcement that the carriage was waiting to take the bride and bridegroom to the railway station from whence they were to start to spend their honeymoon at Killarney.

And so the parting was made amidst tears and jokes and blessings, and wishes for Roni's "next festive meeting," that quite astonished the venerable Gonzalvi, who now, happily recovered, and with a mind at ease, looked every inch a prince. There now being no danger in his going back to Italy, he had succeeded

in regaining his property through the agency of powerful friends, so that being raised to his former affluent position, he had unbounded means of gratifying the artistic tastes which had always been such a marked feature in his character. Having made such true friends in England he passed the most of his time in this country.

Hugh Brandon's great picture had indeed been the making of his fame and fortune, as his brother Jack had foretold. He is now an R.A., but Jack declared he never would have attained his present eminence without *his* assistance. Speaking of the picture for which Mariana had furnished the model, Jack would say—

"Just imagine the foolish fellow thinking he would be robbing somebody if he got £500 for that picture. Now, I just came in the nick of time to have the price altered, before they printed the catalogue, to £2,000, and I don't believe I asked enough then, but Hugh had his name to make at that time, and it was best not to overdo it.

There was a singular thing about the sale of this picture, which was that the purchase had been made by a picture dealer acting for some wealthy client whose name, he said, he was not at liberty to reveal.

Hugh very reluctantly parted with the picture even at that price, for somehow his labour at it had been a wonderful solace to him in his hours of weariness and affliction. And so constantly was the picture present to his mind that even in his dreams he saw it, with Mariana a vision of youthful loveliness, the remembrance of which, he thought, must have inspired his hand and brain almost as much as the very presence of the young girl herself. But slowly it dawned upon him, when he began to commune with his thoughts, that it was not his art nor his picture which had

gradually twined round his heart so much, but Mariana herself.

In due time the once humble, but now famous, painter made the young Italian girl happy by telling her of his love, for in her heart Hugh Brandon had been the only idol which had ever found a place—*she* had loved *him* always. And when Hugh Brandon asked Gonzalvi for his grand-daughter, his request was granted most joyfully, for the old man too, like Hugh himself, revered Art, and thought a princess was no more than a fitting mate for a great painter who was worthy of his profession. Truth to tell, Gonzalvi's dearest wish had been this union, and on the marriage day his wedding gift was a pleasing surprise. It was the identical picture which had been part of the foundation of their happiness, and which he had privately purchased for this very occasion; and Mick Muldowney sagaciously observed on hearing of the affair that "the prince was a cute ould boy, for d'ye mind the picture didn't go out of the family afther all."

Perhaps the most touching incident connected with the marriage was that almost every inch of space in the church was crowded. In fact, Homer's Garden was there in full force, headed by Mick Muldowney and Giacomo. Even Mr. Stubbs, from the Garrick Arms, and old Mrs. Jacob, the Jewess, and others not of the ordinary congregation, put in an appearance to show how they rejoiced at Mariana's happiness; for every man, woman, and child in the place felt they had some property in her since the day she had been left in their midst a helpless little waif.

It ought to be said here that, long previous to the marriage of Hugh and Mariana, the "next happy event" hinted at by Signor Roni had in due course taken place, and that Mary Brandon became Mrs. Stephen Talbot with the greatest satisfaction to her

husband, to herself, and to their very numerous friends.

Mr. and Mrs. Aylmer live with their daughter and son-in-law, and what adds vastly to the importance of Mr. Aylmer is that Jack Brandon has lately become a Member of Parliament for an Irish constituency.

"Gad, sir," he would say to any of his old cronies he chanced to meet, "I always said there was good stuff in that young Irishman. What a man of business he would have made, to be sure!"

Through the influence and assistance of Mr. and Mrs. Talbot, Mick Muldowney has got a well-deserved rise in the world, so that, although nothing would ever induce him to part with the original barrow itself, he has long since discarded the use of the travelling emporium which he considers the foundation of his fortune. Mick first took a shop in a good street, which, with the assistance of his friends, he started as a "first-class grocery and provision store, small profits and quick returns being his motto," as he stated in the handbills announcing his opening.

With the assistance of his wife and son, the latter now growing up a smart, well-educated young fellow, he carried this on so successfully that after some time he went into the wholesale business, and there is now no more flourishing house in the provision trade than that of Muldowney and son.

Mrs. Talbot often drops in to have a chat and a wrangle with her old friend Kitty, and makes as free with Mrs. Muldowney's domestic arrangements as she ever did when she was Mary Brandon. They regularly have tough battles over these details of household management, which are as regularly made up over a cup of tea which Kitty is a rare hand at brewing.

The good old soggarth, Father McMahon, lived many years, happy in the happiness of his dear children, and passed away calmly and placidly, when his time had

come, to his reward. When, through the streets of Liverpool, the vast multitude sorrowfully followed his remains to the grave; a stranger might well have asked what monarch among men was thus being borne to his tomb. Aye, truly, was he a king—a king whose rule was over the willing hearts of men, but more than all of the hearts of the afflicted of every race and creed. Over his grave those who knew him in life have reared a noble Celtic cross, fashioned after the famous old cross of Monasterboice, of granite brought from the place of his birth; but, after all, his best monument is the memory of his virtues that will live long in thousands of hearts.

THE END.



